

Robert Gerhard and his Music

Joaquim Homs
(Edited by Meirion Bowen)

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Contents

List of Illustrations	4
Preface to the English Edition	5
Acknowledgements	8
Joaquim Homs—a Profile	10
Introduction	14
Chapter I 1896-1922: Valls-Switzerland-Munich-Barcelona	19
Chapter II 1923-1928: Vienna-Berlin	27
Chapter III 1929-1938: Barcelona	31
Chapter IV 1939-1948: Paris-Cambridge	41
Chapter V 1949-1953: Cambridge	47
Chapter VI 1954-1959: Cambridge	55
Chapter VII 1960-1970: The Final Decade	65
Chapter VIII Postlude	81
Chapter IX Epilogue	85
Appendix 1 Robert Gerhard's Letter to Schoenberg (1923)	91
Appendix 2 Robert Gerhard: Notes and Sketches	97
Appendix 3 Tributes and Reminiscences by	115
Two American Composers	
Chronological List of Robert Gerhard's Compositions	131
Index of Robert Gerhard's Compositions Mentioned in the Text	135
General Index	137

List of Illustrations

1. (p. 10) Joaquim Homs, as a student of Gerhard in the 1930s
2. (p. 12) Robert Gerhard and Joaquim Homs in 1967
3. (p. 21) Gerhard at the age of 15
4. (p. 26) A portrait of Pedrell, inscribed to Gerhard
5. (p. 30) Gerhard, with Schoenberg at his *Meisterklasse* in the 1920s
6. (p. 32) Gerhard and Poldi, 27 April, 1930
7. (p. 40) Gerhard, Casals and Maurice Eisenberg
8. (p. 46) J. Prats, J. Homs, Poldi Gerhard, J. Gomis and Gerhard in 1948
9. (p. 68) Robert Gerhard in Cambridge in 1960
10. (p. 84) Last photograph of Gerhard and Poldi together, Costa Brava, 1968

Preface to the English Edition

For a variety of reasons, Joaquim Homs's book on Robert Gerhard merits attention as a document of some importance. To date, it is still the only book to be written about a composer whom many regard as a major figure in twentieth-century music—even so, a book that first appeared nearly twenty years after Gerhard's death. First published in Spanish as *Robert Gerhardy su obra* (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 1987), it came out subsequently in an enlarged edition in Catalan, *Robert Gerhard i la seva obra* (Barcelona: Biblioteca de Catalunya, 1991), which included more of Gerhard's own writings. More recently, an abbreviated version, *Robert Gerhard*, has appeared, which nevertheless features several additional photographic illustrations (Barcelona: Editorial Labor S.A., 1994).

The book is first and foremost a personal memoir by Gerhard's one and only regular student of composition. Homs was in close touch with Gerhard at the time when, having completed his studies with Schoenberg in Vienna and Berlin, he had returned to become the prime figurehead for new music in Barcelona throughout an entire decade (1928-1938). Later, when Gerhard was forced into exile with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War and settled permanently in Cambridge, Homs was out of touch with him for about ten years. Regaining contact thereafter, he observed at first hand the leaps and bounds which Gerhard was taking into fresh musical territory. Their master-pupil relationship deepened, with Gerhard providing further encouragement and inspiration to Homs's own musical explorations: so that, in effect, the book contains two parallel creative biographies.

Up to and even after Franco's death, Gerhard's music was neglected in Spain. But Homs made unceasing efforts to promote it, helping to organise performances and broadcasts, writing articles and generally spreading awareness of Gerhard's latest achievements. Homs's book on the composer represents the climax of his efforts in this respect: and it also marked a turning-point, for in the decade or so since it appeared, Gerhard has gradually come to be better known in Spain. Meanwhile, the divisions within Gerhard's career meant that even his admirers have often only known segments of his musical output. On an objective level, thus, Homs's book helps one to understand Gerhard as a whole.

Homs writes about Gerhard in a direct, personal way, often analysing individual works in the sort of detail that would naturally fascinate fellow-musicians, but highlighting also those elements that are of importance to the general listener. A distinctive feature of his book lies in the way Homms gives prominence to his teacher's aesthetic and technical views through the reporting of conversations and the transcription of letters.

The rediscovery and revaluation of Gerhard's work, both in the UK and in his native Spain, received some impetus from the celebrations, in 1996, of the centenary of the composer's birth. Many new recordings have appeared which, in turn, have stimulated further concert performances. A younger generation of interpreters has now accepted Gerhard into their repertoire. Research on the composer has also been facilitated by the acquisition of manuscripts, notebooks etc. by the University of Cambridge Library and the creation of a special Gerhard archive in the Institut d'Estudis Vallencs at the composer's birthplace, Vails in Catalonia.

In preparing this English edition of Homms's book, I have tried to take account of some of the recent developments in Gerhard research. The text contains detailed modifications and corrections to Homms's original which thus bring it more up to date. Readers of the Spanish and Catalan editions of Homms's book will have been aware of some imbalances, for instance, in the biographical coverage, and to some extent I have tried to compensate for these. Nevertheless, while condensing some of the text and adding fresh or complementary material, mostly in the notes to the chapters, I have tried to preserve the flavour of Homms's original. Only Chapter 8 is at all drastically affected: I have abbreviated its listing of memorial events and limited its quotations from tributes to avoid repetition.

A valuable aspect of Homms's book was its inclusion of several essays by Gerhard himself. Since these writings were scattered amongst a great variety of journals, magazines and broadcast scripts, none of which was easily accessible, their availability in Homms's book brought one close to Gerhard's aesthetic and creative ideas. However, all the essays Homms included are now available in my own, more comprehensive selection of Gerhard's writings.¹ Consequently, I have replaced them here with other texts of comparable interest. Thus, Appendix 1 is devoted to an English version of the extended letter Gerhard wrote to Schoenberg in 1923 asking to become his pupil. This semi-autobiographical document will help to fill out Homms's account of Gerhard's early years.

Towards the end of Gerhard's life, he and Homms very nearly managed to secure publication of a selection of Gerhard's miscellaneous writings, some dating from his period in Barcelona in the 1930s, others bearing upon his brief sojourn in Paris in 1939, along with other material from his Cambridge years.

That book never came to fruition. But in 1992, most of it appeared under the title *Apunts* in the magazine *Cultura*.² I thought it worthwhile, therefore, and indeed appropriate, given Homs's strenuous attempts to achieve publication, to produce an English version of most of *Apunts*: under the title, *Notes and Sketches*, this forms the basis of Appendix 2. Here, however, I have departed radically from the original presentation followed in *Cultura*. Instead of its haphazard sequence of jottings, which jump backwards and forwards in time, place and subject-matter, I have substituted a roughly chronological presentation, which also focuses the various components as much as possible in terms of content. Some jottings — on serial technique, for instance — which overlap with later essays covering the same ground rather more thoroughly, I have omitted: likewise, various fragments have been left out that seemed to lack a clear biographical, artistic or intellectual context.

Adding another dimension to Homs's portrait of Gerhard, I managed to elicit reminiscences of Gerhard from two of his American composer-pupils, Jan Bach and Roger Reynolds, relating to his period of residence at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, in 1960, and at Berkshire Music Center, Tanglewood, the following year. The individual perspectives and appreciations which they have provided on their distinguished teacher can be found here in Appendix 3.

Detailed bibliographies and discographies on Gerhard can be found in my edition of Gerhard's writings on music and also on the official Gerhard website (<http://www.robert-gerhard.com>), where they are continually kept up to date. It would serve little purpose, therefore, to repeat the same information here. I have, however, provided a chronological list of Gerhard's compositions, so that readers have some notion of the extent and scope of his creative output.

End notes to the chapters make use throughout of the following abbreviations:

GOM	<i>Gerhard on Music</i> , ed. Meirion Bowen (London, Ashgate, 2000)
CUL	<i>Cambridge University Library</i>
IEV	<i>Institut d'Estudis Vallencs</i>
ACSOP	<i>The Anglo-Catalan Society Occasional Publications</i>

Meirion Bowen
London, 1 January, 2000

Notes

1. *Gerhard on Music*, ed. Meirion Bowen (London, Ashgate, 2000).
2. *Cultura* 30 (Generalitat de Catalunya: Departament de Cultura, January 1992), pp. 29-38

Acknowledgements

Many hurdles had to be crossed before this English version of Joaquim Homs's book could come to fruition. Most had to do with the vagaries of the publishing world, which today sends out (at best) ambivalent signals regarding books that seem unlikely to realise dreams of limitless wealth and everlasting luxury for those concerned. I must first, therefore, thank the author, Joaquim Homs, and his daughter Pietat, not only for their permission to prepare this English edition, but for their patience and continuing encouragement in enabling me to overcome the obstacles. A similar debt of gratitude extends to Montserrat Fonoll at the Biblioteca de Catalunya, who was positive and helpful about the project from the outset, and to Dr Alan Yates, who quickly seized upon the chance to include the volume in the Anglo-Catalan Society's series of Occasional Publications. It is indeed appropriate that the Biblioteca de Catalunya and its Director, Dr Manuel Jorba, should have contributed so positively to making this publication possible. Grateful acknowledgement is also made here of constant support received from the Fundació Congrés de Cultura Catalana for the ACSOP series.

I must also thank Dr Rosemary Summers for giving the Gerhard Estate's permission to include pictures of the composer, provided by the library of Cambridge University, and also for her continuing support for the project; Pietat Homs also supplied three pictures featuring her father, Gerhard and their friends. I am grateful, too, to Oxford University Press for permission to quote from William Clock's tribute to Gerhard in his autobiography, *Notes in Advance* (1991).

The translation of the book and of the Gerhard writings included in Appendix 2 initially involved Agustin Prunell-Friend and myself, then also, Francesc-Xavier Canals. Collaboration with them was throughout an unalloyed pleasure. The translation from the original German of Gerhard's 1923 letter to Schoenberg was primarily the work of Peter Owens, whose assistance I am pleased to acknowledge. But in relation to this important document, thanks are also due to Hannah Vlcek for valuable second opinions on obscure words and expressions and for helping to decipher semi-legible bits of the original handwritten manuscript. Permission to publish an edited English version of

Gerhard's *Apunts* has been kindly granted by the Biblioteca de Catalunya. I am further grateful to Jan Bach and Roger Reynolds for allowing me to include their tributes to Gerhard in Appendix 3 of this book. These two authors retain the copyright of their respective texts, which are published here in edited form with their permission and authority. Musical quotations from Gerhard's Symphony No. 4 and *Leo* are included by courtesy of Oxford University Press, whose authorisation is gratefully acknowledged.

Throughout my research on Gerhard, I have been greatly indebted to Richard Andrewes at Cambridge University Library, to Francesc X. Domingo at the Institut d'Estudis Valencs and to Joanna Crespi and the staff at the Biblioteca de Catalunya in Barcelona, for offering access to archive materials and manuscripts. Their assistance enabled me to update and supplement Homs's original text in many different ways. Likewise, I must thank the Librarian at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München, for information on Gerhard's teachers there in 1914. Lutz Becker provided me with some important documentation from the Thorold Dickinson archive on Gerhard's involvement in the film, *Secret People*, for which I am most grateful. I would also like to thank Gerhard's forthcoming biographer, Julian White, for supporting my efforts to bring out the book in English and for reading through the whole manuscript and making invaluable comments and corrections.

Thanks, finally, are due to Pauline Climpson and Jenny Sayles of The Hallamshire Press for ensuring a smooth passage towards publication. I should add that my task was immeasurably lightened by the support of Stephen Kristian, who also colluded with my cat, Olympion, to ensure that I both stayed the course and remained an agreeable human being.

Joaquim Homs

A profile

Joaquim Homs was born in Barcelona on 21 August 1906. Between 1917 and 1922 he studied for a cello diploma: thereafter he taught himself piano and composition, while qualifying as an engineer. His musical knowledge and compositional skills widened considerably during a five-year period of study with Robert Gerhard (1931-36). Homs thus began to achieve an international reputation as a composer. His music was performed at the ISCM Festivals of 1937 (Paris), 1939 (Warsaw) and 1956 (Stockholm) and at other music festivals in Europe and the USA. From 1928 onwards Homs also wrote regularly for various musical magazines.

Homs has been a prolific composer, mainly in the field of chamber music: the core of this output are his eight string quartets and numerous songs, notably *Seis poemes de J. Carner* (1934) and *El caminant i el mur* (1962), which exists in alternative versions with piano and orchestral accompaniment. His music has generally had an abstract emphasis, moving gradually from free counterpoint towards an individual deployment of serial technique, which (with undoubted encouragement from Gerhard) he began using from 1954 onwards. Most of his orchestral works date from the 1950s onwards, of which one of the most notable was *Presències* (1967), which won him a prize from the City of Barcelona.

In the course of his career, Homs has received many awards and honours, including the *Premi d'Honor de la Música Catalana* (1994).

His book on Gerhard was awarded the *Premi Crítica Serra d'Or de Recerca* (1992).



Joaquim Homs, as a student of
Gerhard in the 1930s

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Joaquim Homs

English translation by Agustin Prunell-Friend

Edited by Meirion Bowen



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Robert Gerhard and Joaquim Homs in 1967

Introduction

In the decade or so in which Robert Gerhard was living in Barcelona, following the period of his studies with Schoenberg (1923-28), I had the good fortune and privilege to become his pupil. This relationship between master and pupil soon developed into a close friendship that was to last until his death. Not surprisingly, therefore, I have many memories of him and, despite my limited talent as a writer, I have felt it worthwhile to record them not only for those already cognisant of the great quality of his music, and interested in learning more of its creator's personality, but also for the benefit of those who have sadly remained unaware.

The impetus to undertake this difficult task has been reinforced by the fact that until now, there has been no book covering the life and complete works of this eminent composer: only articles about selected works published in England, where Gerhard lived for the 31 years of his exile, a consequence of the Spanish Civil War; that is, from the end of 1939 until his death in January 1970. Gerhard's long absence from Spain, apart from a few brief visits on vacation there, together with serious deficiencies in our cultural life, have restricted the dissemination of his works and information regarding his creative character.

This situation improved only in the 1970s, thanks to the appearance of LP recordings of some of his compositions that were often broadcast on Radio Nacional's second programme. Public performances, however, remained very sporadic. This seemed to me very sad, considering that Gerhard was Catalan-born, spent most of his early life in Catalonia and achieved great prominence in musical life there; considering also that during his time in England, he was highly esteemed: and indeed, one eminent critic, David Drew, referred to him as 'the most significant composer Spain has produced since the Golden Age, and one of the most important composers in Europe today'.¹

I first met Gerhard at the end of 1930, when he was 34 and I was 24. He had recently married Leopoldina Feichtegger, of Viennese origin, who had been his student of Castilian and Catalan while he was a pupil of Schoenberg. They lived in Barcelona until the end of 1938 and I had the opportunity to have lessons with Gerhard throughout several periods between 1931 and 1936: though, having graduated as an industrial engineer in 1929, I still combined music with

my career in that field. After I married, midway through 1937, my wife and I continued our warm friendship with the Gerhards; and after nearly ten years of practically no contact (from 1939 to 1948), owing to the World War and the political conditions in post-war Spain, we started to communicate once again by letter.

In the course of several short holidays in Spain which the Gerhards took between 1948 and 1968, they often came to stay with us. Likewise, my wife and I visited them in Cambridge in 1956 and 1959; I saw him on my own there in 1964 and, after his death, visited Poldi with my daughter in 1973. I hope thus that my account of these meetings will convey to readers something of the composer's human side: and the excerpts I have included from some of his letters to me also reveal his personality very well.

Gerhard declared on more than one occasion that he would never dream of writing an account of his own life, despite being an avid reader of autobiographies in general.² For his own part, he believed that '[his] life had been very normal, monotonous and quiet, as is proper for a composer'. Clearly, it could not have been very easy for him to sustain these characteristics over a lifetime that witnessed two World Wars, a Civil War and two dictatorships in his native country. I think myself that Gerhard was temperamentally unsuited to the writing of an autobiography. Gerhard consistently played down the importance of 'self' and was sure that for a creative artist what really matters is his *work*, which his biography could do little to elucidate. He was also against trying to explain his compositions through complicated programme-notes: above all, he was against following a score during a performance. He believed, with good reason, that music is a flow of sonic events, whose meaning has to be perceived by the ear, simply through listening with maximum attention; remaining, that is, sensitive and alert, and allowing a relationship to develop between perception and memory. In this context, it is interesting to note that Gerhard used to destroy the drafts of his works once he had finished them. Nevertheless, I believe that with such a rich and complex personality as his, everything one can learn about him, especially through his own writings, will help sharpen our response to his music.

There are many reasons why Gerhard's music has not become more widely known and valued. In the first place, external factors impeded his own creative development. The First World War prevented him from continuing the studies he had begun in Munich; subsequently, in Barcelona, his studies with Felip Pedrell were cut short by the death of his master. Absent from Spain for five years, in order to study with Schoenberg in Vienna and Berlin, Gerhard returned

to Barcelona in 1929 at a time of political change; he married the following year. A transition there from the dictatorship of 1923 to the Republic established in 1931 and the concession of autonomy to Catalonia in 1932, followed by the upheavals of October 1934, led in 1936 to Civil War—resulting eventually in Gerhard's exile in England—and to the dictatorship that continued beyond the Second World War. All these circumstances, together with severe economic constraints, meant that Gerhard found it a struggle to establish himself. Only in 1959 did his music begin to attain publication in England and the first recording devoted to his works likewise appeared only when he was 71; others appeared after his death, but did not remain in the catalogue for very long. This is regrettable, given that he was so stimulated by the esteem accorded his music in England, that, in spite of poor health, he composed there as many works as he had produced during the previous 35 years.

Another reason for the limited dissemination of Gerhard's music is the difficulty of achieving accurate performance, especially in matters of rhythm and dynamics. Gerhard's compositions cannot be performed well on just a few rehearsals, because the total structure, as well as all the detail, needs to be mastered. Some of his works are conceived for non-standard chamber ensembles using guitar, mandolin and accordion, which makes it difficult to programme them regularly. The orchestral works also require meticulous preparation and contracted conductors often choose not to spend the necessary time studying them, opting instead for repertoire pieces that can be performed with less effort and easier approbation.

Another factor is to be taken into account: throughout his career, Gerhard obtained no regular sponsorship for his music, other than that which came from an enlightened BBC. Against the commercialisation of the musical world, his own compositions stood little chance. One can only hope that musical education will eventually expand the circle of listeners capable of understanding and respecting music of quality from all periods. If this were to happen, Gerhard would be one of the beneficiaries for, to my mind, his music fulfils a basic requirement, namely, that it deepens in value and interest on repeated hearings. Gerhard once said that 'the successful work must carry us from surprise to surprise, and at the same time, retrospectively, it must seem impossible that it has been able to surprise us, everything being so inevitable within the overall conception'. I can assure the reader that these characteristics are present in all his compositions, especially those of his last two decades.

Gerhard made many significant contributions to contemporary music. At this stage, I shall simply point out that his music is always vital, clear and rich in

sonic and rhythmic imagination. An essential quality of his work is an integrity and consistency of language that he learned during his formative years. Being by temperament anti-dogmatic, he managed in different ways to integrate ethnic elements with more abstract ones throughout his *oeuvre*. From 1949, he did this by using serial techniques in an athenatic way. Later on, around 1955, he explored the application of individually conceived sets of relationships, similar to serial ones, affecting metre and durational components. In his last creative period, the most productive and important, all the works are conceived as a single polymorphic movement, made up of a continuous flow of musical ideas whose character, structure and texture are different but related. Instead of the contrasts between homophonic and polyphonic textures encountered in his early compositions, we now find sections where tone-colour, time and texture take turn as protagonists, producing contrasts of tension and contemplation, along with a great variety of uses of *ostinato*. The most important works involve sonorous textures of great atmospheric and expressive power, complemented by an accompaniment of just one or two melodic lines, usually vernacular in character. In this new realm of musical organisation, the functions once attributed to melody are achieved through a play of contrasts, relationships and developments, some venturing close to complete freedom and indeterminacy, others derived from Gerhard's experience in the field of concrete and electro-acoustic music. His essay, 'The Muse and Music Today'³ is particularly revealing in this regard. As one can infer from all this, Gerhard's contributions to the development of contemporary music are not at the end of a particular road, but the starting-point of new avenues for exploration in the future.

Lastly, this portrait of Gerhard aims to reveal a man with a spontaneous and profound enthusiasm for life, nature, peace and freedom: an enthusiasm he shared with his wife over a period of 41 years. He was someone who, whilst devoting himself completely to the creation of music, reflected intensely at the same time upon connections with other disciplines, such as the fine arts, biology, physics, philosophy and history. He was an artist who renewed tradition whilst retaining an awareness of its roots. Despite having to work very often in unfavourable situations, he managed to produce compositions that make him unquestionably one of the most important Catalan composers of all time, deserving at the same time a special place amongst the great musical figures of our century.

Notes

1. David Drew, 'Roberto Gerhard: The Musical Character' in *The Score* (September 1956), p. 49.

2. In one of his notebooks (CUL, 7.106. f. 36v-37), however, Gerhard comments, •Poldi, I have started our biography. I have just found that the first sentence had written itself—the rest will be child's play. You just have to pull gently the thread that sticks out from that ball of cotton wool. You think that maybe I am not choosing my words and *sans quelques méprises* what? Listen—Is that me? that ruddy face, those childish eyes, that noble brow, the mouth not too well drawn, but not bad; the nose, vulgar, not quite romantic; the chin, more delicate than resolute and that grey hair, the colour of smoke and ashes, not yet silver; and look at those bushy eyebrows, that rebellious left one...Roberto! How odd it sounds pronounced in your own voice. Just as odd for that matter as those blue eyes peering into my own blue eyes. Yes. "*Le moi haïssable.*" Curiously enough, I don't seem to hate you as much as I used to. Of course, we have grown old together and that makes a difference. 56 I shall be tomorrow [25 September 1952].' Another two notebooks (CUL 7.112, f21-22, f. 22-23 and 7.114,20v-21) contain further autobiographical notes.

3. Reprinted in GOM, pp. 216-225.

I

1896-1922: Valls-Switzerland-Munich-Barcelona

Robert Gerhard i Ottenwaelder¹ was born in Vails, Tarragona, on 25 September 1896. His father, of Swiss origin, ran a wine export business in that town. His mother was French-Alsatian. He was the eldest son of three children. The second one, Carles, became a member and subsequently secretary of the Parliament of Catalonia. During the Civil War, the Catalan Autonomous Government entrusted Carles with the administration of the Monastery of Montserrat. Subsequently, he went into exile to Mexico, where he died in 1976. The youngest brother, Ferran, carried on the father's business successfully and died in Vails in 1975.

Among the anecdotes and memories of his childhood, Robert Gerhard recalled three which he felt were particularly significant. The earliest one—recounted to him later, of course, by his mother—happened when he was little more than two or three years old. One day he disappeared from his home and all attempts to locate him failed until the local doctor, Dr Saumell, finally found him on the outskirts of the town, crying plaintively in a roadside ditch. The mystery of his escape was solved later. That morning a travelling street-piano had passed in front of his house. Enchanted by its brilliant sounds, he had followed it from one stop to the next, right to the outskirts of the town. It was his first encounter with music and its attraction had been very strong. What he must have recalled several times in later life, at least subconsciously, was that it all ended in tears.

A second memory, now a conscious one, dates back to the time when he used to play with tin soldiers on the balcony of the house. One day, while setting a soldier down on a square floor-tile which, relatively speaking, looked as big as a battlefield, he experienced such an intense feeling of satisfaction that he never forgot it. Obviously, he did not understand what caused this feeling precisely at that moment, but years later he identified it as the combination of an abstract concept, like proportion, with pure sensory experience.

In the preface to a book of writings which he called *Escritos y apuntes de un escritor*, and which a Catalan publishing house planned to issue in 1966, to celebrate his seventieth birthday,² Gerhard reflects interestingly on his first, subconscious, contact with the world of abstract concepts of scale, magnitude and proportion, essential to 'form' in works of art:

The public in general tends to suspect that abstract thought damages an artist's direct and spontaneous expression which, fatally, leads to a coldly 'cerebral' style, the beginning of a 'dehumanised art'. On the contrary, without abstract thought, there is not and there cannot be 'inspiration'! It is not that I think it possible to give a definition of what we understand by 'inspiration', because the phenomenon is unobservable: observation itself alters or negates it. Even so, I would at least dare say how it starts. The beginning is like a two-beat bar: the first beat indicates the appearance of an abstract concept; the second one is the combination of the concept with an element of sensory experience (either present or remembered). If the second beat fails, the first one would have been a mere Saint Elmo's fire —a flash of heat on the horizon that will not have any consequences. On the other hand, if" it works, the combination is capable of liberating an incalculable amount of creative energy, enough to begin a verse, a complete poem, a bar of music or a symphony.

In a way, the notion of scale ought to be considered as the symbolic concept of time characterised by the idea of the expansion of the universe, put forward by astro-physics, no less than by the conquests of miniaturisation inaugurated by micro-engineering. In truth, there is no need to insist on the importance of the concept of 'proportion' in creative work. It could be said that achieving the 'right' proportion is like having won half the battle. Nevertheless, it is true that the right proportion is cold, and the other half of the battle, the tougher one, means 'to find a disproportion in proportion' as Camus rightly claims. It is necessary to win both halves, since half a victory is not a victory. Valid coins have heads and tails!

Gerhard's third significant memory belongs to his school days in Vails. The literary composition class he attended consisted simply of the reading out loud of a story or a short essay which everyone afterwards had to summarise in writing. One day, instead of writing the title of the composition in italics as he always did, he had the idea of drawing it in fancy capital letters, curved and surrounded by filigree decorations with a manifest floral inspiration. The overall effect surprised and puzzled him at the same time because of its mixture of the exotic and the familiar. He soon realised where he had picked up his idea. Not very long before, the most popular store in the street where he lived had commissioned a new 'Groceries' signboard from a painter who must have been quite up to date in his ideas: for the kind of letters he used were typically 'modernist'. This term did not have at that moment any significance for the young Gerhard. He had never seen art magazines, neither had he been to Barcelona, where this artistic movement of *Modernisme*⁴ was becoming highly

fashionable. But the fact is that the painter who supplied the signboard and the eight- or nine-year-old schoolboy Gerhard might be considered the first artists to introduce 'modernism' in Vails.

When Gerhard was twelve, his father sent him to Zöfingen (Switzerland) in order to extend his studies and gain admission to a School of Commerce. He continued his education in Neuchâtel and Lausanne. But his musical calling was so strong that he was soon satisfying it by using his savings to attend classes in harmony and counterpoint with a local teacher, Hugo Strauss. Moving to Lucerne in 1913, he failed his commercial examinations and decided to devote himself to music. The following year, now aged eighteen, and against his father's wishes, he abandoned his business career in order to devote himself to music. With this object in mind, Robert Gerhard went to Munich where he was admitted at the Royal Academy of Music.⁵ The 1914 war, though, ruined his plans and he was forced to return to Vails. From there he later went to Barcelona, where he studied piano with Granados and Frank Marshall⁶ from 1915, and composition with Felip Pedrell from 1916 until 1922.



Gerhard at the age of 15

Pedrell (1841-1922) who was fifty-five years older than Gerhard, was the most important musicologist of that time, responsible for drawing attention to the heritage of polyphonic music in Spain and a fervent advocate of popular song. As a composer he was the leader of the musical revival in Catalonia and pioneer of the lyric theatre along lines comparable to that developing elsewhere in Europe. Pedrell's pupils included Granados, Albéniz and Falla. Gerhard was one of the last to study with him, and on one occasion Pedrell predicted, as Schumann had done with Brahms, that Gerhard would go even further than himself in the compositional field.

Amongst the works Gerhard was writing, just at the time he began studying with Pedrell, was a cycle of twelve songs for soprano and piano, based on poems by Josep Maria Lopez-Pico, *L'infantament meravellós de Schahrazada*, reflecting on the marvellous events leading to the birth of the Princess Scheherezade of the *Arabian Nights*. This he dedicated to his fellow student, the soprano Concepció Badia d'Agustí.⁷ The songs in this cycle are characterised by a vibrant and passionate lyric impulse, not only evident in its expansive melodic lines but also in its harmonic richness and tendency to free the chromaticism that surrounds it. Shaped along the lines of German *Lieder*, these pieces have an unmistakably personal tone, radiate a youthful freshness, sensitive to the pains of love, and they communicate directly and powerfully. This work was soon afterwards published by Union Musical Espanola as Gerhard's op. 1.

In 1918, Gerhard composed the third (and most accomplished) of three Piano Trios, dedicating it to Pedrell. This had its premiere the following year in Barcelona and was published by Editions Maurice Sénart. In Gerhard's first chamber work, the influences of Debussy, Ravel and Falla are evident especially in the first two movements, being less noticeable in the third, whose original imaginative harmonic and structural devices revealed a musical talent outstanding in its time and place.

Following these two pieces, Gerhard devoted more than three years to the intensive study of Bach's music and that of the Spanish polyphonists. His aesthetic ideas were now changing and in December 1921 he composed the first of his *Dos Apunts* (Two Sketches) for piano which hint at a change of direction. It is a very short study in *pianissimo*, with a delicate and magical sonorous atmosphere: only at the end does a faint echo of a popular strain insinuate itself into the contemplative mood of the piece. The second *Apunt* was written in March 1922. It too is quite aphoristic, but it is structured more precisely than the first one. *Dos Apunts* might be described as harmonically

pantonal: and these two pieces now have less in common with Debussy and Ravel than with Schoenberg—especially his Six Little Pieces for piano op. 19 (1911)—and certain works by Stravinsky and Bartók.

In August 1922, the year in which Felip Pedrell died, Gerhard composed *Seven Haiku** for voice and ensemble, on poems in French by the Catalan poet Josep M. Junoy.⁹ The voice here is accompanied by an instrumental group made up of flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and piano and extends Gerhard's previous textural experiments to add depth to the setting of short Japanese-style poems. Some of the songs are divided into five parts (instrumental prelude, first vocal section, interlude, second vocal section, postlude), in order to compensate for the extreme brevity of the vocal contributions, which thus are spaced out more broadly. The treatment of the voice is more comparable with that of Stravinsky in his *Three Japanese Lyrics* (1913), rather than with the songs of Schoenberg and Webern, whose wide intervallic leaps Gerhard avoids. On the other hand, the instrumental lines are more extreme. Of all the songs in this beautiful cycle, the one that stands out for me is the last one, which evokes a local folk-tune, transmitting exactly the bitterness and tenderness that exile can inspire: the emotion was one that Gerhard obviously re-visited in his work more than once during the thirty-one years he lived far from his native land. The words of the song are:

But in exile—
 what use is this flower,
 this insect,
 this cloud?

During the next two years, 1921-22, following his studies with Pedrell, Gerhard underwent a period of deep self-examination. He was aware of the dramatic changes that had affected both the arts and the sciences from the beginning of the century. In the plastic arts, Cubism and other '-isms' were in the forefront: meanwhile, Einstein and Planck were responsible for revolutionary scientific ideas. In music, these changes were manifest in the new tendencies represented by Satie and *Les Six*; by Bartók in Hungary, Janàček in Czechoslovakia, and Falla in Spain; and by Alois Hàba's experimentation with quarter-tones and athematic forms. Stravinsky had emerged from the Nationalism of the Group of Five to explore new possibilities for the tonal system, as applied to old musical forms: he, above all, was opening up new horizons in the realms of metre, rhythm and texture. Outstanding in Spain was the music of Manuel de Falla, stemming from vernacular sources, but with a refined instrumental treatment that clearly manifested the influence of French post-impressionism, and comparable to

Stravinsky in revitalising the musical forms of an earlier period. Italy had seen a Futurist movement whose musical aspect was ultimately to be of theoretical interest, anticipating other subsequent trends rather than being remembered for its own achievements. North America too had its innovators, Charles Ives, Henry Cowell among others. Finally, the group that comprised Schoenberg and his disciples Alban Berg and Anton Webern stood decisively for methods of giving coherence to a free play of musical pitches, methods that comprised an alternative to those of classical tonality: and their work was to make a profound impact on music during the rest of the century.

Not surprisingly, faced with such varied, exciting, even alarming possibilities, Gerhard felt at 26 an urgent necessity to advance his musical education so as to develop his own creative personality to the highest degree. Looking for the direction that would best suit his temperament, he made a preliminary investigation of the possibilities in Paris and several German towns, also visiting Madrid and Granada,¹⁰ where he had a disappointing meeting with Falla. Then he isolated himself in a farmhouse retreat near Vails, so as to work without distraction and meditate upon his experiences. Ultimately, attracted especially by the qualities of renewal which he discerned in the musical movement instigated by Schoenberg in Vienna, though not sympathetic to its 'expressionist' tendencies, Gerhard decided to write him a long letter explaining his situation and asking if he would accept him as a pupil." Among the works he submitted for approval were his *Dos Apunts* and *Seven Haiku*. Schoenberg responded briefly, but positively,¹² and Gerhard went to study with him in Vienna and Berlin from 1923 to 1928.

Soon after Schoenberg's death, in 1951, Gerhard told me that the latter's widow had very kindly given him back the letter he had sent from Vails twenty-eight years earlier. He confessed that re-reading his own words greatly surprised him, since a lot of what he wrote then still seemed valid. At the same time, it is remarkable and revealing that Schoenberg should have held on to that letter all his life.

Notes

1. It is customary in Catalonia for the complete version of a name to include the names of both the father and the mother, in that order. In the original Spanish version of Homs's book, Gerhard's mother's name is given as Offenwaelder, but in the Catalan edition it is changed to Ottenwaelder; the latter is what appeared later on Gerhard's marriage certificate (reproduced in Homs, *op. cit.*, p. 39).

During the latter part of his career, when he was living in England, Gerhard opted to use 'Roberto' as his Christian name. All his publications, musical or literary, from then

onwards and all recordings of his music have appeared under the name 'Roberto Gerhard'. Here acknowledging the extent and duration of Spanish oppression of Catalan culture during Gerhard's lifetime, I have throughout the texts by Homs and Gerhard himself adopted the authentic earlier form, 'Robert'. In the reminiscences by two of Gerhard's American pupils which comprise Appendix 3, however, I have reverted to 'Roberto', as that was the name by which they knew him.

2. It eventually appeared as *Apunts de Robert Gerhard* in *Cultura* (Generalitat de Catalunya: Departament de Cultura, January 1992), pp. 29-38; see Appendix 2, below.

3. St Elmo (an Italian corruption of St Erasmus) was a 4th-century Syrian bishop who came to be regarded as the patron saint of seamen. The 'fire' or 'corposant' (holy body) attributed to him was the ball of fire sometimes seen playing around the masts of ships in a storm.

4. Catalan *Modernisme* was rather different in emphasis from the modernist art that evolved in the rest of Europe. It was stylistically coloured by Art Nouveau, as is evident from the work of its best known exponent, the architect Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926): see David Mackay, *Modern Architecture in Barcelona (1854-1939)*, no. 3 (1985) in the ACSOP series. *Modernisme* was launched in the 1890s by the impressionist painter Ramon Casas (1866-1934) and the poet, painter and writer on art, Santiago Rusiñol (1861-1931); its subsequent exponents in painting included Isidre Nonell (1873-1911) and the young Picasso. A succinct account of *Modernisme* in English can be found in E. Trenc and A. Yates, *Alexandre de Riquer (1856-1920). The British Connection in Catalan 'Modernisme'*, no. 5 (1988) in the ACSOP series.

5. For further information on this phase in Gerhard's career, see Appendix 1.

6. Frank Marshall i King (b. Mataró, 1883, d. Barcelona, 1959) came of an English family. He was a pupil of Granados and, on the latter's death in 1916, he became Professor at the Acadèmia Granados. The friend of the all important composers of his time, his most renowned pupil was Alicia de Larrocha. Apart from his own compositions, he also published *Mecanismo del pedal y de la sonoridad del piano* (1919).

7. Concepció Badia d'Agustí (1897-1975) studied with Granados, Casals and Falla. At her Barcelona debut in 1913, she gave the first performance of the *Canciones amatorias* by Granados, who dedicated two of them to her. She also gave the premiere of Falla's *Psyche* (1927) and collaborated with numerous other Spanish and Latin-American composers. Most of her early career was spent in Barcelona, but she sang in Paris in 1937, accompanied by Cortot, at the ISCM Festival that year in Vienna, where she gave the premiere of Gerhard's *Sis cançons populars catalanes* (conducted by Webern), and also in London (five broadcasts on BBC radio), Belgium and Switzerland. From 1938 until 1947 she lived in Argentina and worked closely with Falla towards the end of his life. She returned to Barcelona to become Professor of Singing at the Barcelona Conservatory—where Montserrat Caballé was among her pupils—and Professor of Piano at the Granados Academy.

8. Sometimes given as '7 Hai-Kai' (e.g. in the programme for the 1929 Barcelona concert of Gerhard's music).

9. Josep M. Junoy (1887-1955) was a Catalan modernist poet, who made his name with an *Ode to Guynemer* (1916), addressed to an heroic aviator. This poem imitated both Apollinaire and Marinetti. Junoy founded a vanguard magazine that published Reverdy, Soupault, Miró and J.V. Foix, among others. But after 1939, Junoy began to write in Castilian and affected embarrassment when his avant-garde past was mentioned.

10. According to a notebook-cum-diary in IEV, Gerhard visited Paris in May 1921, Madrid and Granada in October.

11. See Appendix 1, below.

12. The text of Schoenberg's letter is given on p. 95 (note 9), below.



A portrait of Pedrell, inscribed to Gerhard

II

1923-1928: Vienna-Berlin

When Gerhard arrived in Vienna in 1923, Schoenberg had been creatively silent for eight years. There were two reasons for this: he was called up into the army to take part in the Great War; secondly, a good deal of his time was occupied with considering the musical ideas he had begun to explore in his *Harmonielehre* (1910-11). Here he had opened a perspective on the immense potential for composition that substituted for the classical tonal system a new method of organising pitch-relations, retaining a fundamental unity between melody and harmony—that is, considering chords as vertical aspects of melodic lines. In the course of a walk with the musicologist Josef Rufer, in the summer of 1924, Schoenberg revealed that he thought he had discovered a new compositional method, based on the twelve notes of the chromatic scale, that would have great consequences for the future of music. The first fruits of this method were his Five Piano Pieces op. 23 and Serenade, composed between 1920 and 1923: but his methods were fully applied in two subsequent works, the Suite for piano op. 25 (1923) and Wind Quintet op. 26 (1924).

Gerhard arrived in Vienna, thus, at a crucial point in Schoenberg's own development and in the evolution of music in general. Nevertheless, as Gerhard found, Schoenberg did not simply teach his new method to his pupils. On the contrary, he concentrated their minds quite strictly on classical harmony and counterpoint, whose rules could then be applied in other musical contexts.

Another of Schoenberg's pupils, Heinrich Jalowetz wrote: 'Arnold Schoenberg possesses the two basic abilities of every genius and thus of every teacher of genius: on the one hand, the force of naive perception which can do without the help of tradition and which forces him to re-formulate everything, from the smallest everyday matters of life to the highest human and artistic questions and to make it live anew; on the other hand, the power of communicating his personal evaluation of these matters in a convincing way.' Hence the impact of Schoenberg's teaching and the profound effect it had on those who studied under him. He demanded from them the greatest artistic honesty, again, according to Jalowetz, so that they would challenge and consider degrading any progress that could not be justified.

Gerhard himself had much the same qualities as a teacher, as I myself can testify. The rigour which he inherited from Schoenberg and passed on to his

disciples never presumed to limit their creative freedom. At one of Schoenberg's chamber music evenings, the performance of a piece by Stravinsky sparked off sharp criticism from Berg and Webern. Gerhard, who was 13 or 14 years younger than these two, despite his great respect for them, dared to point out the good qualities of the work: and to his surprise, Schoenberg did not dissent, demonstrating that he was less dogmatic than his pupils.²

At this time, in order to cover his expenses, Gerhard gave Spanish lessons at a rather splendid apartment, complete with grand piano, which he had rented in the centre of the city, near the Opera. To inspire confidence in prospective pupils, he advertised himself as 'Dr Castell, Professor of the Spanish Language'. Leopoldina Feichtegger, who was later to become his wife, was among his pupils. According to a certain Dr Sarró, who had met Gerhard while attending Freud's psychoanalysis courses, his association with his future wife began when she presented him with a rose.

During his stay in Vienna, Gerhard became passionately interested in the current trends in the fine arts, literature and science, all then in a period of upheaval and renewal: the new concepts of matter, energy and time introduced by Planck and Einstein; the innovations in the fine arts pioneered by Picasso, Braque, Kandinsky and Klee; the new ideas of narrative time in the writings of Joyce and Proust: all fascinated him. Gerhard told me later that in order to purchase one of the volumes of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, he went without food for a time, even though by temperament he was not at all Proustian. All the new ideas that emerged in these scientific and artistic contexts affected Gerhard deeply and he soon aligned himself with the general reorientation and renewal of artistic language and expression.

In 1923, Schoenberg's first wife, Mathilde, died. The following year he married Gertrude Kolisch, sister of the violinist Rudolf Kolisch, who was one of his most loyal disciples and later, as leader of the Kolisch Quartet, one of the prime exponents of Schoenberg's music. In 1925, the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin offered Schoenberg the post of Professor of Composition, which had become vacant with the death of Busoni. He accepted this position and Gerhard followed him to Berlin to continue his studies. The same year, Gerhard arranged for the Associació de Música de Camara in Barcelona to present the Spanish premiere of *Pierrot Lunaire* and other Schoenberg compositions, with the composer himself conducting. This memorable concert took place in the Palau de la Música Catalana, on 29 April, 1925. The programme notes were written by Gerhard. As was the case when *Pierrot* was performed in other European cities, the work was a *succés de scandale*.

Schoenberg's courses for the State Academy of Music—a branch of the Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin, out of which grew a Department for Musical Composition—were conducted not at the Academy building in Pariser Platz, but at his own house, an arrangement he generally preferred. Josef Rufer, at Schoenberg's instigation, gave additional lessons to those students who wanted to study Schoenberg's compositional methods in depth and Gerhard worked as Rufer's assistant for some time. In 1928, the last year of his period of study with Schoenberg, Gerhard completed his Wind Quintet, deploying for the first time elements of serial technique, but actually using seven tones rather than twelve. While the four movements of the Quintet follow Schoenberg's processes of continuous variation, its different sections are diversified and contrasted, alternating contrapuntal textures with homophonic passages wherein the main melodic line at times has a strong popular flavour. Unified in all its internal relationships, the whole Quintet has a rare luminosity, clarity and vivacity of colour, typically Latin, without any trace of expressionism or of Stravinskian neo-classicism. While thus having taken a direction quite distinct from that followed by other composers, Gerhard had also gone his own way as far as the treatment of the musical vernacular was concerned. In his *14 cançons populars catalanes* and *Two Sardanas* for wind instruments (1929), the sense of unity between melody and accompanying parts is as strong as if they had been serially constructed.

All these works, along with *Seven Haiku* (1922) and a three-movement Concertino for strings, composed between 1927 and 1928 were included in the programme of a concert devoted to his works which the Associació de Música de Camara presented in Barcelona on 22 December, 1929, three months after his return from Berlin.³ Leopoldina Feichtegger, by now his fiancée, and known as 'Poldi', attended this concert and they were married on 27 April the following year. Their long-lived partnership provided Gerhard with the support necessary to pursue his vocation through all manner of difficult circumstances. From 1930 until the end of 1938, the Gerhards lived in Barcelona, first in a top-floor apartment in the Carrer Verdi, then in a flat with a large balcony in an old country house, situated in the Barri de la Salut, near the Travessera de Dalt.

Gerhard's stay in Vienna and Berlin coincided with the establishment of a political dictatorship in Spain, which held power from 13 September 1923 until the end of 1929. The transitional governments that followed led finally to the proclamation of the Republic on 14 April, 1931. Mussolini had already attained power in Italy and the Nazi movement was making great advances in Germany. Gerhard's musical development, begun in the shadow of the Great War, thus

evolved against a background of political upheaval and economic insecurity. Any hope that cultural activities might blossom during the Republic were soon cut short by the Spanish Civil War. It was not until the last fifteen years or so of his life, in fact, after he had emigrated to England and continued living there after the Second World War, that Gerhard was enabled to undertake creative work in reasonably comfortable circumstances.

Notes

1.. Quoted in H.H. Stuckenschmidt, *Arnold Schoenberg* (transl. Edith Temple Roberts and Humphrey Searle, London, 1959), p. 77; it first appeared as one of the testimonials regarding Schoenberg's teaching methods, contributed by nine of his pupils to the Arnold Schoenberg Symposium (Munich, 1912), published to celebrate his fiftieth birthday.

2. For Gerhard's account of the occasion see 'Reminiscences of Schoenberg', in GOM, pp. 106-112.

3. This concert too was a *succés de scandale*. For further background, see GOM, pp. 41-49.



Gerhard, with Schoenberg at his *Meisterklasse* in the 1920s

III

1929-1938: Barcelona

I first became aware of Gerhard back in 1922, when I was about 16 years old and had finished my school-leaving examinations and my cello studies. The violinist Enric Roig¹ used to teach my sister privately and inspected my first compositions. He invited me several times to visit him in Badalona (just up the coast from Barcelona), where he was then living, to show me musical scores, reproductions of paintings and contemporary avant-garde poems, which he was sure would interest me. Through him I started to know the names and some works of the main poets, painters and composers of the second decade of the century. Talking to me about Catalan musicians, he especially praised those works of Gerhard, which he had heard, such as the *Schahrazada* song-cycle, and the Piano Trio. It was at that time Gerhard had decided to go to Vienna, so I did not hear more about him until his return to Barcelona in 1929, when I attended the concert devoted his works at the Palau de la Música Catalana. This concert made a great impression on me, despite the absolute hostility of the audience towards the Wind Quintet.

Meanwhile, during 1922-1929, I studied to become an industrial engineer, while still practising the cello and, more sporadically, composing. I performed as a cellist several times, both with a piano accompanist and as member of a quartet. I also organised a series of musical sessions in the studio of the architect and writer Ramon Sastre, at which poets like Sebastià Sànchez-Juan, Xavier Benguerel, Josep Vicenç Foix and Carles Riba were present.²¹ even remember a New Year's Eve supper, which the painter Joan Miró attended. In that studio we founded *Joia*, an art magazine, but it did not survive for long. It was there that I wrote my first articles on music, and once, in 1928, I visited the painter Torres Garcia in Paris to ask him for some reproductions to illustrate an article about his work.

By the time of Gerhard's Barcelona concert, I had obtained my degree as an industrial engineer six months earlier and had just started working. I continued playing the cello and composing, but I did not consider myself sufficiently qualified to be able to compose more complex pieces. Just when my doubts about what direction to follow were becoming stronger, I began in 1930 to make music with the violinist Eugènia Domènech, niece of Lluís Domènech i



Gerhard and Poldi, 27 April, 1930

Muntaner, the architect of the Palau de la Música Catalana. An artist with great temperament and sensitivity who had been Gerhard's friend and fellow student when they both studied with Pedrell, Domènech encouraged me to ask Gerhard for lessons so that I could learn from his experience of Schoenberg's teaching.

The meeting with Gerhard took place at the home of the singer Concepció Badia d'Agustí. After hearing and examining some of my work, and giving some aural tests, Gerhard agreed to accept me as his pupil, warning me beforehand that he did not believe he possessed any teaching skills. He said he would do all that he could to pass on the musical knowledge he had learned from Schoenberg who, as well as a great musician, was also an extraordinary teacher. Thus, for several periods between 1931-36 and at the start of 1937, I studied harmony, counterpoint and composition. As my work as an engineer necessitated living in Tarragona, these lessons were sometimes widely separated, taking place only twice or three times a month.

The doubts Gerhard had shown about his aptitude to teach were dispelled completely for me from the outset. His lessons were as exciting for me as the readings of the best pages of Proust, Valéry or other important writers about art. He possessed to a high degree the power to analyse and illuminate problems in a fundamental way, suggesting to whoever was listening that he was uncovering marvellous truths of great consequence. Opening before him a score or a simple exercise, I found that his very presence made me see my faults considerably augmented. I always regretted never making detailed notes about his lessons; however, I recall them quite distinctly, and despite my nervousness, I found myself long afterwards resenting Poldi for her relentless knocking at the door at the agreed finishing time for our lesson!

It was not long before our lessons were extended with long conversations walking on the wide terrace around his apartment in the Barri de la Salut, from which one could see, on one side, the town with the sea in the background and, on the other, the rolling line of the Tibidabo, Vallvidrera and Sant Pere Màrtir mountains running gently down into the Llobregat plain. We talked about everything, from every-day problems to music, art and the essential questions of human existence. Gerhard was someone with a broad culture, particularly interested in arts, philosophy and sciences. He knew how to get to the heart of any issue using his very personal mixture of profound knowledge and brilliant improvisation. He was an extraordinary conversationalist, and his 'small-talk' was much appreciated later in England. Soon we had become really good friends.

Our difference in age was only ten years, while Gerhard was twenty-two and fifty-five years younger than Schoenberg and Pedrell, respectively. It is not

surprising, then, that our friendship continued throughout his life, despite the long separations caused by his exile. When I married Pietat Fornesa, in June 1937, the Gerhards quickly accepted her into their circle of friends. We all travelled to Paris together for the festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music, where a piece of mine had its premiere. It was the year of the Universal Exhibition; the Spanish Civil War had started a year earlier. At the Spanish pavilion in the Exhibition, designed by the architect Josep Lluís Sert, we had the chance to see for the first time Picasso's *Guernica* and works by Miró and the sculptor Julio Gonzalez, among others.

During the first few years after he had settled in Barcelona, Gerhard, trying to dedicate himself to music, experienced great financial difficulties. If nowadays it is a real struggle for a composer to try to survive on his earnings from music alone, in those times it was even worse. Radio broadcasts of contemporary music were virtually non-existent. Recording was still in its infancy. Films with soundtracks were a new phenomenon. Compositional training at the conservatories was set in antiquated ways. Commissions for new pieces from composers were almost impossible to obtain. Opportunities to write works especially for orchestra or chamber ensembles were rare. Not surprisingly, then, Gerhard had to earn his living initially by translating books on music theory and history for the publishing house called Editorial Labor; he also regularly wrote articles on music in the weekly magazine *Mirador* and in the *Revista de Catalunya*.³ Gerhard felt disinclined to teach and I was his only pupil. Later on, he worked in the music section of the Institute of Catalan Studies and in the Biblioteca de Catalunya with his friend, the musicologist Msgr Higiní Anglès. With the arrival of Catalan Autonomy and restoration of the Government of the Generalitat in 1932, Gerhard participated in the creation of the Escola Normal and was a member of the Music Board, created by the Councillor for Culture, Ventura Gassol. The published products of Gerhard's musicological research included transcriptions of Six Quintets by Antoni Soler for strings and organ, and the opera *La Merope* by the 18th-century Catalan composer, Domènec Terradellas,⁴ which he prefaced with a study of the work and its composer.

At this time, Gerhard was active in artistic and musical circles in Barcelona and the international contacts he had built up, while studying with Schoenberg, enabled him to help enliven the concert scene. Along with Joan Miró, Josep Lluís Sert, Joan Prats and others, he started the ADLAN⁵ group that promoted new artistic ideas; he was also active in a Friends of Recording Club, promoted by Ricard Gomis at a time when records were beginning to improve in quality

and variety, anticipating the boom that occurred later. Gerhard also assisted the organisers of the *Associació íntima de Concerts* in introducing to Barcelona important works of contemporary music, like Schoenberg's String Quartet No 1, Berg's *Lyric Suite*, a stage-production of *Histoire du soldat* by Stravinsky and music by Bartók and others.⁶

During Gerhard's nine-year stay in Barcelona, there were three events of great cultural importance for the city. First, Schoenberg and his wife Gertrude came to stay for nine months, from October 1931 until June 1932. They took up residence in a modernist *Jugendstil* villa located in the Vallcarca district. Secondly, thanks to Gerhard's negotiations, Webern conducted two concerts in Barcelona in the Spring of 1932, giving the premieres of three of his own pieces and one by Schoenberg. Thirdly, Gerhard's reputation within the ISCM resulted in the 1936 Festival taking place in Barcelona. At this, Berg's *Wozzeck* fragments and his Violin Concerto were given their first performances and Bartók's Fifth String Quartet was also featured.

Schoenberg always recalled his stay in Barcelona with pleasure. In Berlin, the rise of Nazism had created a disturbing environment. The support Schoenberg had received from pupils and admirers in Vienna did not compensate for the hostility and lack of understanding that his works aroused among the greater part of the audience and critics. In Barcelona, however, he was known only to a very limited circle of music-lovers and he had complete independence. These circumstances and the constant attentions he received from the Gerhards contributed decisively to his being able to develop his life and creative work in a serene and stimulating environment.

In these favourable conditions he composed his *Klavierstück* No. 2, op. 33b, and the greater part of the second act of his opera *Moses und Aron*. Poldi Gerhard, who was then pregnant,⁷ sometimes visited the Schoenbergs and she and Gertrude would talk very quietly in the same room where the master was composing. Sometimes he surprised them by putting aside his twelve-tone rows and joining in the conversation when they spoke about some mutual friend in Vienna.

On 3 April 1932 Schoenberg conducted a matinee concert given by the Orquestra Pau Casals under the auspices of the *Asociació Obrera de Concerts*. The programme included his *Verklärte Nacht*, the symphonic poem *Pelleas und Melisande*, the Eight Lieder op. 6, for voice and piano (interpreted by Concepció Badia and Antoni Vilalta), and his superb orchestral transcription of J.S. Bach's Prelude and Fugue in E flat Major for organ.

On May 7, the daughter of Schoenberg's second marriage was born and given the popular Catalan name of Núria: this event symbolised the happy memories

of his stay in Barcelona. When on 30 May, 1933 he was, on account of his Jewish origins, effectively deprived of his Berlin professorship by the Hitler regime, he tried through Gerhard to arrange a firm position for himself in Barcelona. But Gerhard was only able at that time to offer a couple of lectures; so, after a short stay in Paris, then in Arachon, Schoenberg decided to accept a proposal sent by the Halkin Conservatoire in Boston, moving there in November that year.

Gerhard also arranged for Webern to come twice to Barcelona. On his first visit, in the spring of 1932, he conducted two concerts in the *Asociació de Música de Camara*. Included in these programmes were Webern's *Passacaglia* op. 1 and the Six Pieces for orchestra, op. 6 and Schoenberg's *Music for the Accompaniment of a Film Scene*, op. 34. In a letter to Gerhard of 6 May 1932, Webern expressed satisfaction with his stay in Barcelona and, especially, with the 'excellent sonority' of the Orquestra Pau Casals in Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, asking him if it would be possible for him to direct two to four concerts there each year. In fact, he did not return until April 1936, when he was due to conduct at the ISCM Festival.⁸

Gerhard's own compositional output during this period was limited. Two main components of his music still co-existed: the ethnic and the semi-serial, one or the other uppermost depending on the nature of the individual piece. In 1932 he composed a Cantata in five parts for soprano, baritone, mixed choir and orchestra based on a poem by Josep Carner, *L'alta naixença del rei en Jaume (The Noble Birth of the Sovereign Lord King James)*.⁹ The fourth and fifth movements only were conducted by Gerhard himself at the ISCM Festival in 1933 in Amsterdam. The work received first prize in the competition organised by Universal Edition in Vienna, in memory of their founder: the adjudicating panel included the composers Berg, Webern and Krenek. It was Carner himself who had suggested that Gerhard should set to music his poetic narration of the unusual and amusing circumstances in which James I, the Conqueror, was begotten. The Cantata lasts about 15 minutes and the titles of the five parts are: *Introduction and Litany, Divino, Follia [Madness], Passacaglia* and *Chorale*. The soloists make their first appearance in the second (soprano) and third (baritone) movements. Musically, the work is symmetrically structured around the central part (*Madness*). Right from the start, its musical language has two aspects: on the one hand, modal monody of a vernacular character in the *Introduction*, and on the other hand, a kind of melody conceived independently of classical tonality, in the *Litany*: this duality parallels musically the mixture of old and modern modes of expression in Carner's poem. Each is used only fragmentarily in a serial way and in some

parts, especially the last two, they are of equal status. On the other hand, modal lines prevail in the choruses, and the major triads that often occur are free from any tonal function. The *Passacaglia* is based on a 15-note chromatic theme.

Dating from the same year as the Cantata is Gerhard's version for voice and chamber ensemble of his *Sis cançons populars catalanes* (1928), which was performed for the first time at the ISCM Festival in Vienna, conducted by Anton Webern. Both versions are now published. In these delightful songs, the accompaniments are either derived from or related to the melodies they support and the instrumentation shows great refinement.

At the 1936 ISCM Festival in Barcelona, a concert suite from Gerhard's music for the ballet *Ariel*, received its premiere, conducted by Hermann Scherchen. The ballet itself was based on the liberation of Ariel in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Gerhard composed it in 1934, at the suggestion of Antal Dorati and Leonide Massine, who at that time were, respectively, conductor and first dancer/choreographer of Colonel de Basil's ballet company. The scenario for the ballet was by the poet Josep Vicenç Foix, and the stage designs were created by Joan Miró. When Massine heard the music, however, he found it excessively symphonic, and for this reason it was never performed as a whole. The concert suite has four movements played without a break, each divided into a series of contrasting but tightly unified episodes.

Gerhard's association with the De Basil Ballet Company led to another ballet commission which, for other reasons, never reached the stage. In 1936, Colonel de Basil and Massine, along with the Councillor of Culture of the Generalitat, Ventura Gassol, came to a meeting at Gerhard's home and proposed to commission from him a ballet with a Spanish or other regional subject. On Gassol's initiative, they went to watch the festivities of the Patum in Berga,¹⁰ which made a great impression on them. The commission thus took shape as a ballet based on Midsummer Day celebrations, with the title *Soirees de Barcelone*." Ventura Gassol created the scenario and Gerhard started composing the music. But by the time he finished it, he was already in exile in France and, concurrently, Colonel de Basil's company was dissolved. The ballet project thus did not come to fruition. It was partially revived in 1972 as a four-movement orchestral suite, performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by David Atherton. Not until September 1996 was it possible to realise what the entire ballet was like, when a performing version was prepared by Calum MacDonald and played by the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Matthias Bamert.

Another work written in his Barcelona period was Gerhard's orchestral composition, *Albada, Interludi i Dansa* (1937), whose first public performance

took place in the Catalan capital on 14 May 1938 and was conducted by Joan Lamote.¹² It was repeated at the London ISCM Festival in 1938, under Hermann Scherchen, eliciting high praise from Bartók, who happened to be present.

The manuscripts of two other works from this period are missing: *Cançons i arietes* for soprano and piano (1936) and a Duo for soprano, contralto and piano, setting Josep Carner's poem *Les vídues vulgars*, which was performed for the first time in Barcelona on 24 May 1930, by the singers Pilar Ruffi and Concepció Callao, accompanied by Maria Carratalà.

Notes

1. The violinist and musicologist Enric Roig i Masriera (1892-1962) was born and died in Barcelona. He was an energetic promoter of musical activity in Catalonia. A pupil of E. del Pino and Pedro Jofre, he appeared as a violinist in various ensembles that performed all over Spain. As a scholar, he did research on the different schools of violin technique, giving many courses, lectures and concerts expounding and illustrating his discoveries and emphasising the need for period authenticity in performance. He was Professor of Music History at the Liceu Conservatory in Barcelona and a noted writer on a broad spectrum of musical subjects, extending his work to radio from the 1940s onwards. His books include *La música del Renaixment* (1917), *Les valors de la música contemporània* (1928) and *Cant de tardor* (1925), the latter devoted to modern English music.

2. For more information on these writers, see Arthur Terry, *Catalan Literature* (London and New York, 1972); Stephen M. Hart, *Spanish, Catalan and Spanish-American Poetry from Modernismo to the Spanish Civil War: The Hispanic Connection* (Hispanic Literature, Vol. 11: New York, 1991); David S. Zubatsky, *Spanish, Catalan and Galician Literary Authors of the Twentieth Century: An Annotated Guide to Bibliographies* (New York, 1992). Convenient access to the work of Foix, in English, is supplied by *Readings of J.V. Foix* (edited by Arthur Terry), no. 10 in the ACSOP series (1998).

3. See chronological list of writings and translations in GOM, Appendix I, pp. 244–247.

4. Domènech Miquel Bernabé Terradellas (1713-51) was born in Barcelona and trained at Barcelona Cathedral. He moved to Italy in 1732 and was based at first in Naples, where he wrote oratorios. The success in Rome of his opera *La Merope* (1743) led him to settle there. He visited London and Paris (1747-50) but passed the remaining years of his life in Italy; he died in Turin in mysterious circumstances.

5. *Amies de l'Art Nou* (Friends of New Art).

6. Gerhard's notes for all these sessions are in IEV.

7. Poldi suffered a miscarriage and, after a subsequent operation, was unable to bear children.

8. Excerpts from Webern's letters to Gerhard can be found in *The Score*, 14 (November 1958), pp. 36-41.

9 For a detailed account of this work, including the complete text in Catalan and English, see Geoffrey J. Walker, 'Gerhard, Carner and King James' in *Tempo* 139 (December 1981), pp. 12-16; also David Drew, 'A Note on the Music', *Ibid.* pp. 17-18

10 Berga is a town in the Pyrenees. Its ancient folk festivities of 'Saint John's Fire', held on Midsummer's Eve, were among the many pagan celebrations of the Summer Solstice held throughout Europe.

11 The original title for the ballet was *Les Feux de Saint Jean*. The title and the setting were changed (partly as a gesture of solidarity with the Republican cause and with Catalan culture) to *Soirees de Barcelone* after Gerhard went into exile in Paris. For a detailed account of the background to its composition see Calum MacDonald, '*Soirees de Barcelone*—A Preliminary Report' in *Tempo* 139 (December 1981), pp. 19-26; 'Towards a Performing Version' in *Tempo* 198 (October 1996), pp. 22-36; also Julian White, 'Gerhard's *Soirees de Barcelone*: Catalan Folk Sources' in *Tempo* 198 (October 1996), pp. 11-21 and 72.

12. Its world premiere took place in London, on 27 October 1937, in a radio broadcast given by the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Gerhard himself. The broadcast was one of a series planned in response to public concern regarding current events in Spain. For the same series, Benjamin Britten and Lennox Berkeley collaborated on an orchestral suite, *Mont Juic*, which was based on Catalan folk-tunes they had notated in Barcelona the previous year.



Gerhard, Casals and Maurice Eisenberg

IV

1939-1948: Paris-Cambridge

After Barcelona was occupied by the self-styled 'national' military forces, on 26 January 1939, the Gerhards never resided there again. During their exile they lived, first of all, in Paris, near the Place Saint-Sulpice, close to their friends the architect Josep Lluís Sert and the painter Joan Miró. Subsequently, they moved to Meudon-Valfleury where they lived in a studio at the house of their friend Pétro, the widow of Theo Van Doesburg.¹ There Gerhard completed the piano score of the ballet *Soirees de Barcelone*.

Circumstances in Paris were relatively congenial for work, but another opportunity was in the offing. Negotiations begun with the Cambridge professors Edward J. Dent (then president of the ISCM), and J.B. Trend, at last came to fruition: Gerhard was offered a minor fellowship at King's College under just one condition—that he should live in Cambridge; he had no other obligation towards the College or University.

Gerhard and his wife arrived in Cambridge in June 1939. For the first two months they had just two rooms in which to live. In August they moved to a small furnished flat in which they had an upright piano at their disposal. Just as they were starting to adapt to their new circumstances, in September that year, the Second World War broke out. Also, shortly before the war, Colonel de Basil's company went bankrupt and was dissolved: in consequence, Gerhard's ballet commission was unfulfilled.²

In Cambridge Gerhard struck up a friendship with the Zoology professor Sydney Smith, who was a pianist and member of the committee of the University Musical Club. Gerhard gave his first concert at the Club on 2 December 1939.³ On 1 June 1940, he and Smith together played Debussy's *Six Epitaphes Antiques* and soon after, Gerhard took part in another concert where he performed a selection of Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* and Stravinsky's *Serenade in A*. On 19 April he accompanied the soprano, Margaret Orr, who sang some of his songs; on 23 May he played the piano reduction of his first suite from the ballet *Don Quixote*, which had already been performed for the first time in its orchestral version the previous year in Cambridge, conducted by Constant Lambert.

During the first year of the War, the BBC commissioned Gerhard to present some radio programmes in Castilian, intended mainly for South American

audiences. The programmes centred in turn on Granados, Albéniz, *Chopin and George Sand in Majorca*⁴ and *An Imaginary Encounter between Mozart's and Rossini's Figaros*. Gerhard developed a close relationship with the BBC Theatre Orchestra and its conductor Stanford Robinson. As a result, the BBC also commissioned from him several orchestral arrangements of Spanish light music. These included three superb fantasies on *zarzuelas* by Barbieri and Caballero.⁵ The experience of hearing his own orchestrations strengthened his command of instrumentation: for he now had opportunities for informal discussion with orchestral players regarding the most effective ways to achieve various effects.

In the course of Gerhard's first years in England, it made a lot of sense for him to highlight the ethnic aspect of his music, since it might lead to further opportunities for work. Subsequently, from about 1949 onwards, this orientation became a background feature of his music: for by that time, he had begun to build a reputation in England as a creatively independent, individual composer and had formed friendships with some of the main BBC producers, notably Lionel Sailer. He also became a close friend of William Glock, who edited the magazine *The Score* and was later to become Controller of Music at the BBC, instigating its all-day Music Programme (originally an extension of the Third Programme, now Radio 3).

Gerhard had a great facility with languages and in this period, his knowledge of English advanced greatly, through his reading of English literature: a further stimulus came from Poldi's attempts at communicating with friends, neighbours and shopkeepers. Gerhard began to write articles about music in English, including some contributed to *The Score*. In an article, entitled *England, Spring 1945*, published by the magazine *Tempo*,⁶ he expressed regret at the narrow-mindedness of current concert programmes, in contrast with the high level of the performers, and especially that of choral associations and brass bands. This situation was partly a consequence of the War. But in his own case, although the problem was exacerbated by his status as an exile, it proved a spur to the further development of his musical personality. In fact, Gerhard composed more works during 1940-47, than during the previous two decades.

Gerhard's most important compositions from this period included two *Don Quixote* Suites I and II (1940-41 and 1942), which were developed from music for a radio adaptation of Cervantes's novel and eventually became a full-length ballet (1947-49). Two more ballet scores by Gerhard reached the stage at this time: *Alegrias: Divertimento flamenco* (1942), which was first performed in Birmingham with choreography by Marie Rambert; and *Pandora* (1943-44),

which was choreographed by Kurt Joos. In a symphony entitled *Homenaje a Pedrell*, Gerhard commemorated his teacher Felip Pedrell, basing his score on themes from Pedrell's unperformed opera, *La Celestina* (1904). Rejected at the time by the BBC, the work was not performed until the mid-1950s and only the finale was then heard, under the title *Pedrelliana*.

Gerhard composed numerous songs and song-arrangements at this time, notably his *Cancionero de Pedrell*—a set of eight songs for soprano and chamber ensemble (1941); *Por do pasará la sierra* (1942), for soprano and piano; *7 condones de vihuela* (1942), for soprano and piano (based on songs by Milan, Pisador, Valderrábano and Vâsquez); *Sevillanas* (1943), for voice and piano; and *Six Tonadillas* (1943), for voice and piano. In 1943, under the pseudonym Joan Serrallonga,⁷ Gerhard composed *Tres canciones toreras* for voice and orchestra (or piano); and a song to a Portuguese text, *Engheno Novo*, for voice and orchestra. There followed his Sonata for viola and piano (1948), premiered two years later by Anatole Mines accompanied by the composer: however, in 1956, Gerhard revised and extended it in a definitive version for cello and piano. Finally, that same year he orchestrated three well-known pieces by Schubert and completed the music for a radio version of Salvador de Madariaga's *Cristobal Colón*, commissioned by the BBC.

Gerhard's larger-scale works from this period included the ballet, *Pandora* (1943-44), scored for two pianos and percussion; from this he extracted an orchestral suite in five movements. Gerhard's Violin Concerto (1942-45) was premiered at the Maggio Musicale Festival in Florence in 1950, with the solo role taken by the Catalan violinist Antoni Brosa and Scherchen conducting. Gerhard also completed a three-act opera, *The Duenna* (1945-47), whose libretto was adapted from Sheridan's eponymous play, now set in Seville.⁸

The music for the ballet *Pandora* reveals a temperamental affinity with that of Bartók, not only in its vivacity, colour and rhythmic richness, but also in several technical aspects (scales, assymetries, textural and structural contrasts, etc.) indicating new dimensions of his musical personality to be explored in subsequent compositions.

Gerhard's Violin Concerto vividly reflects the circumstances in which it was composed. The first two movements were written during the World War. The initial theme of the first movement is the same as in the Concertino for strings (1927-28). Both movements have serial and free parts, but the relative disparity of the language is softened through clever and imaginative transitions. The last movement, composed after the War, is completely free, beginning with a quotation from the *Marseillaise*, symbolising freedom, followed by references

to earlier music, namely sardana tunes and rhythms, and at the end, a Spanish dance. In the central part, the emotional apex of the work is reached, producing a climax of considerable virtuosity for the solo violin. This mixture of techniques continued in *The Duenna*, but here it was the theatrical context that determined the character of the musical language—from tonal to pantonal to serial.

Gerhard's ballet score *Don Quixote* uses two different languages to represent musically, on the one hand, the protagonist and the fantastic characters that he was obsessed with, and on the other, Sancho Panza, the muleteers, inn servants and the other 'saner' characters. At the same time, Don Quixote himself needed a double language, since the Knight of La Mancha is a mixture of common sense and madness, of good sense and delirious hallucination. To represent it musically, Gerhard finally extracted from his 20-note theme (of which only nine are different notes) another theme reduced to twelve notes, in which the nine different ones are presented in the same order as the original theme and the other three repeated; this theme serves to represent the role of its abstract double. The use of this second tone-row in accordance with Schoenberg's serial technique, offered him infinite scope for the invention of any kind of images connected with the principal theme, regardless of their character: just as Don Quixote's hallucinations come from the absurd actions provoked by his chivalric obsession.⁹

It was not until the summer of 1948 that my wife and I had the pleasure of renewing our relationship with the Gerhards, after nearly ten years of separation and complete non-communication—apart from two brief postcards they sent us in 1939 and 1949 to let us know they were still alive. Returning to Barcelona on holiday, after such a long absence, they looked forward especially to the sun. We invited them thus to join us in Blanes (Costa Brava), where we had rented an apartment for a month. We spent eight or ten days together, promising each other a repeat visit as soon as they were free to enjoy another break. Naturally, we had many things to talk about! They told us about their life in Cambridge, the experiences of those difficult years, and their activities and musical projects. The previous year Gerhard had completed *The Duenna*, and was hoping that it would be broadcast on the radio by the BBC the following year. On the way through Barcelona, we tried, without success, to arrange a staged performance at the Teatre del Liceu. The only promise forthcoming, however, was the premiere of some of Gerhard's works in an orchestral concert that Stanford Robinson had been invited to conduct during the Lent season. From Blanes, we went to Tossa to visit the violinist Antoni Brosa. For myself, I showed Gerhard some of the compositions I had written during his absence, and he encouraged me to keep on working. Amongst them only one had been

premiered in Barcelona up until then, thanks to the interest shown by the Belgian pianist Pauline Marcelle, a refugee in our city during the war. Gerhard included it in the programme for a concert at the Belgian Institute in London, in 1950, alongside his original two-piano version of the ballet *Pandora*.

Soon after returning to Cambridge, the Gerhards moved from Thorney Creek, Herchel Road to 5 Adams Road. Following their removal, Gerhard wrote to us on 16 December 1948, recalling his recent visit to Blanes:

The memory of our stay with you often figures in our conversations, with a surprising richness and liveliness of detail, as if we had mentally recorded everything in technicolour film. Projected here on the screen of our grey sky, you cannot imagine the indescribable quality of the light in which we see the scenes pass by: you, the three of you appear, the big Pietat [Horn's wife] and little Pietat [Homs' daughter] appeared (her velvety voice, wise, expressing impatience at still being small, *comme la vie est lente et l'espérance est violente*)...

My wife had from an early age devoted time to drawing and painting and it was precisely during those years, in Blanes, that she began to paint sketches in oils on paper, expressing with an individual freshness and liveliness her love for nature and life. She gave the Gerhards some of her sketches, and they responded by presenting her with Paul Klee's *The Thinking Eye*.

Notes

1. Their address there was: chez Theo von Doesburg, 41 rue Charles Introit, Meudon, S. et. O. See Appendix 2, pp. 99-104.

2. See p. 37, above. A fuller picture of the 1939 turning point for Gerhard emerges from the correspondence in the R. F. Kahn collection at the Modern Archive Centre in King's College, Cambridge. The prime catalyst was Edward J. Dent who had come to know and admire Gerhard in the context of the ISCM Festival (of whose committee Dent was Chairman). The official offer to Gerhard of a studentship worth £200 for one year, but renewable for a second, arrived in a letter from the Second Bursar dated April 22 1939. Gerhard wrote his letter of acceptance from France on 26 May 1939. The studentship was specifically from King's College, not from the University, and Dent, with a keen eye for the response of the immigration authorities, saw that the offer would enable Gerhard to continue the research on early music which he had begun in Barcelona: he later wrote, 'We are going to ask him to do some work for the Cambridge [University] Musical Society'—editing a ms. at the Fitzwilliam which we would perform in March'; Dent was also instrumental in arranging for the studentship to be supplemented by a grant of £50 from the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning.

Gerhard came to London in June 1939, at the invitation of Lady Mayer (wife of Sir Robert Mayer, organiser of the renowned children's concerts), to deal with arrangements for the performance of *Soirees de Barcelone* by the Colonel de Basil Company, but these all fell through as the company had already been dissolved. Gerhard settled in Cambridge at the home of Mrs Scherchen (divorced wife of the conductor Hermann Scherchen) at 136 Bunco Grove. Dent arranged for him to make use of his room and piano while he was absent for two months in America. Recognising his straitened circumstances, the College advanced him the money and made a dispensation allowing him to eat twice a week, free of charge, at High Table. Gerhard and his wife subsequently moved to 13 Emmanuel Road.

3. Sydney Smith, 'The War Years in Cambridge', in Programme Book for the London Sinfonietta's concert series, *The Complete Chamber Music of Schoenberg and Gerhard* (London, 1973), pp. 99-100.

4. The text is in the Gerhard archive at CUL, but entitled *Chopin in Valldemosa* (CUL 11.5).

5. *Gigantes y cabezudos: fantasia sobre la sarsuela de M.F. Caballero* (c. 1943), written under the pseudonym Joan Serrallonga (see note 7 below); *Lamparilla: obertura de la sarsuela, El Barberillo de Lavapiés, de F. A. Barbieri* (1956).

6. Reprinted in GOM, pp. 177-179.

7. A mythical Catalan bandit of the seventeenth century.

8. See GOM, pp. 81-87.

9. See GOM, pp. 88-100.



J. Prats, J. Homs, Poldi Gerhard, J. Gomis and Gerhard in 1948

V

1949-1953: Cambridge

Gerhard devoted three years to a definitive version of his ballet *Don Quixote*, completing it in 1949. It was to be premiered at Covent Garden by the Sadler's Wells Ballet with choreography by Ninette de Valois and designs by the surrealist painter Edward Burra. During this time he was reconsidering his personal view of Schoenberg's technique in the light of the works his former teacher had composed after emigrating to America; he had also noted the variants on serial technique that had evolved in Europe and America, including the under-valued anticipations of serial technique by Josef Matthias Hauer and Alois Hába. Gerhard's reflections on musical theory were currently enriched by philosophical and literary exploration: he read, on the one hand, William James, A.N. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, and on the other, Albert Camus and Simone Weil.

The works he composed between 1940 and 1947 revealed overtly his Hispanic character and had already won him a high reputation as a musical nationalist—comparable, indeed, to Falla. But his creative aspirations and frustrations demanded from him the evolution of a more individual technique and this, in the 1950s, led to profound developments in his music.

The first results are evident in the *Capriccio* for solo flute, premiered in 1949. Here Gerhard put his ideas about the application of serial method into practice. The work is based on a twelve-note row which divides into two hexachordal limbs, the second of which (in the source-set form) is the transposed retrograde inversion of the first.

Gerhard developed these ideas further in his *String Quartet No. 1*, written the following year. Also dating from this period are his *Three Impromptus* (1950) and *Piano Concerto* (1951), again entirely serial in conception, but retaining a strong Hispanic character. The culminating work of this period in his development is his *Symphony No. 1* (1952-53).

From the first partially serial works Gerhard composed, he had already used different treatments of tone-rows. These he now developed and applied extensively during 1950-55: they included i) segmentation of the series of twelve tones into groups of three or four notes and permutations of the tones that constitute each group; ii) reintegration of the concept of scale within the serial order, to produce a scale constituted by the notes of each hexachord arranged in the nearest positions; iii) utilisation of a series not for thematic purposes, but as a combinatory code. The background to these ideas is outlined in two important articles Gerhard wrote at this time: 'Tonality in Twelve-Tone Music' and 'Developments in Twelve-Tone Music'.¹

This period in Gerhard's career saw the first BBC radio broadcast of his opera, *The Duenna*, conducted by Stanford Robinson. His ballet *Don Quixote* was acclaimed by the English critics as one of the highest quality scores to be heard that year (1949) in London, comparable to Stravinsky's *Orpheus*. The ballet enjoyed great success with its audiences, though Gerhard was not very happy about the choreography. In a letter dated 2 May 1950 he told me that what pleased him most was the fact that some people had attended several performances. Unfortunately, we ourselves were unable to be present, because of my wife's prolonged illness.

Two years later, in a letter dated 30 April, Gerhard told me that the BBC had commissioned from him a 26-part series of illustrated talks for its Third Programme embracing a complete conspectus of Spanish music. He outlined the plan he had for these talks and, mentioning that the Director of European Services, Lionel Salter,² was shortly coming to Barcelona, asked me to help him in the research and collection of materials he would be making locally for the series. 'Basically,' he told me, 'our plan is to present Spanish music in three series of parallel programmes: a) Art Music (from the Visigoths until the present); b) Popular Music, region by region; c) talks on subjects that would give an idea of the cultural context in which the music was produced. I have thought, for instance, of Zervos on romanesque painting, Malraux on Goya, Brennan on medieval poetry, Wilson on Góngora, Madariaga on Don Quixote, etc.'³

During Sailer's stay in Barcelona, I introduced him to the engineer Josep Bartomeu, a music-lover who, had for ten years been organising numerous concert series as well as opera and ballet performances at his house in Pedralbes.⁴ These were among the most important and unusual musical occasions ever achieved without official support or financial subsidy, as the programmes offered a complete view of Western music. Likewise, I also

introduced Mr Salter to another music-lover, also an engineer, from Barcelona, Josep M. Lamana, who founded and conducted for many years the group *Ars Musicae*⁵ and specialised in the interpretation of early music with original or authentically reproduced instruments.

In Barcelona the same year (1952), Club 49 resumed its activities. This private organisation had been created to present works by young avant-garde painters and sculptors (some now internationally famous) who found it difficult to express themselves freely in the political climate of the period. Taking advantage of the improvement in recording produced by long-playing discs, we presented a contemporary music series, at which each work was carefully chosen according to the significance of the composer and his importance in twentieth-century musical history. This first series was planned in collaboration with Carles F. Maristany, who related it to Gerhard's own activities in the field twenty years earlier: and it was followed by further sessions introducing new works and intermingling live and recorded music. In these concerts we were able to introduce some of those works of Gerhard's that had not yet been heard in Barcelona. Others were presented later in the concerts organised by Club 49's new musical section called *Música Oberta (Open Music)*. Among the pieces featured were the Three Impromptus and the Piano Concerto.

The Impromptus (premiered only in 1955 by Albert Ferber) revealed a musical language of strong ethnic character, the third of them freer than its predecessors. The Piano Concerto, first heard at the Aldeburgh Festival, with Noel Mewton-Wood as soloist and Norman Del Mar conducting, linked its clear ethnic roots to dodecaphonic material: its best qualities are evident in the beautiful, slow middle movement and in the finale. The other works 'Open Music' presented eventually at Club 49 were: *Dos Apunts*, *7 Haiku*, the Nonet, String Quartet No. 2, *Concert for Eight*, *Hymnody* and *Libra*.

On 2 May 1953 Gerhard wrote me to say that around the 14th he and Poldi would come to Girona, so that his wife could have a check-up with the local doctor who had treated her when they still lived in Barcelona. They thought of spending a few days afterwards in Calella de Palafrugell on the Costa Brava. Gerhard apologised in the letter for being a poor correspondent, explaining that a number of commissions had completely absorbed his time and attention. He also apologised for the haste and brevity of his letter, since he was just about to get the train to Stratford, where he and Poldi were going to attend the premiere of a production of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, for which he had written the music. As soon as they arrived at Calella, my wife and I went to spend the weekend with them: we were unable to invite them to Blanes as

before, because we had hired the apartment for only one month that summer. Despite the shortness of our meeting, it had a profound and lasting effect on me. I remember, as if it were today, a walk which we took at night, under the full moon, along the fragrant path between pine trees that hugged the sinuous coastline. Gerhard explained to me the ideas that had propelled him in a new direction during recent years. He also informed me in advance of his project to explore new possibilities of extending the application of serial methods to the temporal scale, and even to the structure itself of his compositions, aims he would achieve a few years later. Likewise, he told me he intended to write some athematic orchestral compositions, each in a single movement lasting 12 to 15 minutes, taking from Valéry the title *Rhumbs*. In these, the musical interest would be concentrated within a flow of ideas that were polarised, but integrated.⁶

Gerhard indicated also that he planned to compose an opera on Albert Camus's novel, *L'Etranger*. He had already written a libretto, with the warm approval of its author. Unfortunately, he could not find the financial support to bring it about and was reduced to composing instead the music for a radio version of the story, finally broadcast by the BBC in 1954. Subsequently, in 1961, he provided incidental music for the radio version of Camus's *Caligula*. Later on, in 1964, his interest in this author bore fruit in a cantata on *The Plague*.

As well as Camus, we talked about our recent readings of Kafka and Sartre, and Gerhard recommended me to read Valéry's *Mon Faust*: subsequently, I saw a production of it in Paris. We also exchanged views on the latest developments in painting and cinema. In the previous year, Gerhard had composed the music for five BBC TV documentaries, collectively entitled *War in the Air*, and an excellent film which has not been shown in Spain, *Secret People*, directed by Thorold Dickinson. Of the music for this film, Gerhard wrote:

There is no incidental music in the film, the only music is natural to the demands of the story. This necessary music is intrinsic to the story and reinforces its emotional development.

There are two principal themes. One is composed as a folk-tune of the country from which the principal characters come. The other is the theme of the two lovers, Maria and Louis, and is also meant to be native to their country of origin.

Theme A is first stated on a barrel organ at the beginning of the main titles; after a few bars a full orchestral version of theme B takes over.

Theme A



Theme B



Theme A returns on the barrel organ at the beginning of the film. It reappears as a gramophone recording in a popular version played by a small orchestra: at appropriate moments theme B is introduced on the same record, particularly at Maria's first appearance in Anselmo's cafe.

Again at the Paris Exhibition, this arrangement is played by a military band, with theme B accompanying the first meeting of Maria and Louis.

In the Vieux Chapeau night-club, theme B is played as a tango with a lyric in French (written by Marcel le Bon). Towards the end of the film, Nora dances in a ballet first with the *corps de ballet* and then in a *pas de deux*.

Theme A is used for the first dance and theme B for the *pas de deux*. Theme B is used also to accompany the cast list at the end of the film.

Gerhard's Symphony No. 1, which belongs to this productive period of 1949-53, was dedicated to his wife and premiered at the ISCM Festival in Baden-Baden in 1955. This, in my opinion, is one of the important symphonic compositions of our century and I would like to end this chapter by considering it in some detail. It consists of three movements, each divided into a small number of large spans. The first six bars deploy, motto-like, a twelve-note series divided into two six-note groups. The first group traces a quietly descending line from high to lower strings; the second (in woodwinds and brass) reverses

the line's direction, as well as the dynamics, fanning out from the low register of the clarinet to the high-pitched flute and piccolo and growing fast to fortissimo level. The combined outline is the matrix of the whole work. The staggered entries of the partly divided strings, each string part holding on to its allotted note, build up a six-note chord: so that the melodic line appears in fact to be self-harmonising—a procedure exemplifying Gerhard's concern to overcome the classical melody-harmony dichotomy. Together, the two six-note groups spell out the complete series. While the time-signature is common-time (4/4), the actual temporal articulation of the opening phrase looks as follows: 3/8, 3/8, 3/8, 3/8, 2/8, 4/4, virtually an elongation of the main beat that is given aural definition through the half-bar stresses provided by percussion.

In context, the significance of the first six bars is that of a large 'up-beat' serving to launch the form, outlined in four main episodes. The first of these starts at bar 7; the second, though more inward-looking, grows naturally out of the preceding line of thought. This is all sharply contradicted by the third section, *scherzando*, whose lightness of touch is preserved in the transition to the fourth and final section. Here for the first time the strings are highlighted, manifest in a continuous gentle chordal strumming. A solo tuba motif begins the coda to the movement, which eventually builds to a series of recurring patterns spread over the whole range of the orchestra, after which the movement is cut off abruptly.

The *Adagio* that follows has five large spans of music, the outer ones very slow and mainly static, the inner three somewhat faster and more dynamic. Sections 2 and 4 have related musical materials, as do sections 1 and 5 also.

The opening alternates widespread, long-held chords with shorter, *cantabile* phrases presented by a trio of woodwind instruments. There are several striking passages here, such as the string-writing of the second section, played fast and *sul ponticello* so that individual pitches are not aurally identifiable. In the central episode, violin, viola and cello soloists interact with the full orchestral *tutti*. By the fifth section the slow tempo of the opening has returned and the music subsides to a long drawn-out solo double-bass line.

The finale, *Allegro spiritoso*, is about twice as long as the preceding movements, mirroring in its own form that of the whole work: two fast-moving outer sections, one quiet central section. It moves briskly from one short section to the next, leading to a climax: a long pause then follows, preparing the way for the stillness of the central section. The final episode returns to the opening hectic tempo and pursues its course in one continuous span of music to the very end. The denouement is signalled by a sudden break, a heaving chord that yields

a rising line in the woodwinds, then three viola notes open up one last vista—a solitary, long-held high harmonic in the solo violin, swelling gradually as the rest of the higher strings join in and then quietly fading out.

Notes

1. See GOM, pp. 116-128 and 129-138.
2. Lionel Salter (1914-2000) was a versatile musician, writer and administrator, active throughout his career as a harpsichordist, pianist and conductor. He studied at the Royal College of Music, then under Boris Ord and Edward J. Dent, continuing with Constant Lambert (conducting) and Arthur Benjamin (piano). He worked as a music assistant for BBC television in its early years. During war service, he was guest conductor of the Radio France Symphony Orchestra, returning in 1945 as assistant conductor of the BBC Theatre Orchestra and three years later becoming music supervisor of the BBC European Service. For his series of programmes on Spanish music, he persuaded Casals to record for the BBC and accompanied him at his home in Prades. Sailer's subsequent BBC posts included Head of Music for television, Head of Opera and Assistant Controller of Music. From 1972 to 1976 he was opera coordinator and producer for the European Broadcasting Union. His wide range of musical interests included Iberian and Latin American music and he wrote regularly for the periodical *Gramophone*. Salter translated the libretti of 126 operas and prepared performing editions of baroque works. Sailer's books, which include *Going to a Concert* (London, 1950) and *Going the Opera* (London, 1955) were best-sellers.
3. See Andre Malraux, *Psychologies de l'Art III* (Paris, 1950), *La Monnaie de l'absolu*; English transl. Stuart Gilbert, *The Twilight of the Absolute* (New York, 1950); also *Saturne: essai sur Goya* (Paris, 1950), English transl. C.W. Chitton (London, 1957); G. Brennan, *The Literature of the Spanish People* (Cambridge, 1951); Angelica y Medoro's article, 'On Galícia' in *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, (Liverpool, 1953), 85-94; Salvador de Madriaga, *Guia del Lector del Quijote* (Madrid, 1926); *Don Quixote: a Study in Psychology* (London, 1934).
4. Josep Bartomeu i Granell (1888-1980) presented concerts at his house, Jardí dels Tarongers de Pedralbes, between 1948 and 1958. They covered a wide repertory, including the opera *La Merope* by Domènec Miquel Terradellas, Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, a string quartet by Blancafort and Satie's *Socrate*.
5. Josep Maria Lamana i Coll (born Barcelona, 1899) studied at the Liceu Conservatory and privately with Higiní Anglès. He was one of the founding members of the Orqestra d'Estudis Simfònics de Barcelona, which in 1935 became *Ars Musicae*, a vocal and instrumental group specialising in pre-classical music. *Ars Musicae* was directed from 1957 until 1972 by Enric Gispert and subsequently by Romà Escalas M 972-79). This pioneering group spread awareness throughout Europe of the achievements of medieval and Renaissance Catalan music, performing on radio and television and making numerous recordings, notably a version of the *Llibre Vermell de*

Montserrat, now issued on CD. After the dissolution of *Ars Musicae*, its instruments and musical documentation were preserved in the Museu de la Música de Barcelona.

6. Gerhard never in fact wrote any work bearing this title, but in 1988 Homs himself composed *Rhumbs*, for a mixed ensemble of 10 players.

7. See Lindsay Anderson, *The Making of a Film: The Story of 'Secret People'* (London, 1952). Anderson wrote later: "The scenario of *Secret People* called for a ballet, of undefined Southern European origin, in which one of the principal characters (played by the then unknown Audrey Hepburn) was a principal dancer...I remember well Roberto coming to the studio, talking about the theme of the ballet (something quite conventional, I think, about a grape harvest...) which was choreographed by André Howard. After discussions, Roberto came back and played a theme which captivated everybody...! think everybody took the theme to be original; only some years later I recognised it as a traditional folk theme, when I heard it played on the radio in a recording by Segovia. It was the *Cant dels ocells* (Song of the Birds) also made famous by Gerhard's friend Pau Casals: a beautiful, broad and romantic melody which, as arranged by Roberto, served its purpose very well.' (Quoted from *Tempo* 139, December 1981, p33.)

In Gerhard's *Sample Piece*, for violin, clarinet and piano, written in advance of obtaining a contract to write the music for *Secret People*, Theme A is the basis of its second episode; Theme B emerges towards the end. (The manuscript for this piece and of the score for the film are in CUL.)

It is perhaps not surprising *Secret People* was not seen in Spain at the time. Dickinson's plot was set in 1937 and based on a newspaper item about a woman who, having abandoned her allegiance to the IRA, had to change her identity and flee from reprisals. But Dickinson transformed the heroine into a fugitive from a continental dictatorship.

VI

1954-1959: Cambridge

By the second half of the 1950s Gerhard enjoyed a solid reputation in England, even though his works did not begin to be published there until 1958. In 1953-54, lacking any knowledge of the works described in the previous chapter, I was somewhat hesitant about the way my own music might evolve. Not surprisingly, then, faced with the enthusiasm which Gerhard had expressed in our last meeting for the athenatic and dodecaphonic developments in his music, I was left stunned and for some months thought hard about it all. Regarding this, Gerhard wrote to us on 6 October 1953:

I am terribly grieved to learn that our very brief contact this summer has had a negative effect on Joaquim's production. However, it might not be as serious as it seems. In the end, the stops and the *quo vadis, domine* are natural; an intelligent man does not always waste his time when he is standing still. The issue is not to stay like that for a long time. If my moral support is worth anything, here it is. As Schoenberg used to say, the creative artist only learns from himself, not from others, surprising though it may seem. As to what path to follow, is there any doubt? There is only one: forwards. You know it is not worth doing *safe* things. The only worthwhile things are the extreme ones. But it is also necessary that they be correct, obviously. In this case, today's extreme things are tomorrow's simple things. The work of art has, obviously, the expressive aspect and the formal aspect. But in the first case, what it expresses unknowingly is probably more important than what it expresses deliberately. Besides, all human activity has this involuntary expressive aspect; the writing of a letter has it. Ergo: *why bother?* The essential thing is to understand that creating is a spiritual adventure. Therefore, strike Rocinante with a whip, loosen his restraint, and you can be sure he will carry you towards difficulty. It does not matter whether he belongs to one sign or the other. I would even dare say that it is as important to finish victorious as with a broken rib. What matters is the conduct in the action, the code of conduct it reveals.

At the end of the letter, he suggested that I should add a third movement to my Trio for flute, violin and bass clarinet (1952), offering to include it in the programme of his panorama of Spanish music for BBC radio the following

year. In fact, my Trio was not programmed until December 1953; but Gerhard's briefly expressed opinion on the score inspired me to further work: so the same year I composed a completely serial work, *Polifonia* for strings. This was premiered in one of the concerts organised by Josep Bartomeu and given in the Orange Garden of his house in Pedralbes (Jardí dels Tarongers), a building which was later to become the Generalitat's Centre of Musical Documentation. It was at one of those concerts, which took place from 1948 to 1958, that Gerhard's Piano Concerto was performed with Jaume Padrós as soloist—the first performance of a recent and significant work by Gerhard in Barcelona since the Civil War. The recordings we made of these concerts and which we promoted through the activities of Club 49' helped enliven the languid cultural life of Barcelona in the years immediately after the Civil War.

In a letter dated 2 March 1955, Gerhard told me that he had received my recently composed Piano Sonata No. 2, and that his first impressions were excellent. This comment inspired me to continue along the new path I had initiated, which was why I soon composed my Three Impromptus. He congratulated me, incidentally, on the title of the the second movement of the sonata, *Derivations*, which, he said, 'describes the intellectual character typical of serial technique better than *Variations*, which somehow inevitably implies repetition'. In this letter, he also told me that his Symphony No. 1 would be premiered at the ISCM Festival in Baden-Baden, with Hans Rosbaud conducting. After this Festival, which we unfortunately could not attend, the Gerhards came to the Costa Brava to rest for a few weeks. First they stayed in Tamariu, and soon after in Aiguablava. We visited them there and made plans to spend a holiday together in Blanes from the beginning of July, and also for the Gerhards to stay in Barcelona for two or three days before returning to Cambridge. Gerhard was very pleased with Rosbaud's interpretation of his Symphony. He also told me about the concert in the same festival at which Boulez's *Le marteau sans maître* had been premiered, and an interesting visit to an electronic music laboratory, accompanied by our mutual friend, the engineer Ricard Gomis. Among other things, Gerhard had listened to Bach's music manipulated through filters that transformed completely its sonorous effect, while the structure remained recognisable. During his stay in Blanes, apart from commenting on music and books we had encountered since his last trip to Spain, he began to explain in more detail his projects to explore the application of the serial method to metre and rhythm, and even to the development of the intrinsic form of a composition. His ideas on all this are contained in the article, 'Developments in Twelve-Tone Music'.²

On 9 November 1955, Gerhard wrote to me recalling the pleasant days they had spent with us in Blanes. He told me that listening to the recording of my Piano Sonata several times had confirmed his initial good impression. But he advised me, in general terms, to try in future to reduce the frequency of the contemplative episodes that abounded in my works. He added:

When you're at the wheel, concentrate on the road, on the speed of the car, etc. and do not let go of it to point at the beautiful landscape with your arms in the air. It is characteristic of the way you drive, but those of us in the back are sometimes petrified. Do not be less expressive, but de-personalise more.

In May of the same year, Ricard Gomis commissioned from him a chamber music composition, Nonet for wind instruments (among which Gerhard included an accordion). In June, my Trio for flute, oboe and bass clarinet was premiered in the Stockholm ISCM Festival, but I could not go to hear it. At the start of the autumn, I informed Gerhard of our next trip to London and Cambridge. Responding on 24 October, he commented on our plan:

Now is the time to visit England. The following month is the worst of all. Now is the time to walk in the parks, the feet hidden under a thick carpet of leaves that go xacrrres-xacccres-xacccres while you kick your way through them. It is the time when the elms, oaks and alder trees become covered in wonderful colours, and you can almost feel like the beating of drums both on the right and the left; the ripe apples and large quinces drop and go 'pom', like a bass drum. Now is the time; within a month, everything will be finished. The trees become leafless, with wrinkles on their faces, the branches touch each other with the points of the twigs and say to each other; 'And you have also lost them?; Don't you think we shall grow them again?'...

During that trip, from which we retained many pleasant memories—partially disturbed by the news of the Suez crisis and the reactions it provoked in London—I had a chance to listen to the recording of his String Quartet No. 1, performed by the Parrenin Quartet. Gerhard had written the first two movements in 1950, at a time when he was using twelve-tone technique in a very personal way. The first movement presents a similar structure to the classic sonata, in which the function of traditional tonality is replaced by a play of tensions which generates what we could call 'serial tonality'. The second movement, very light and contrasting with the previous one, was originally called *Capriccio*; this movement constitutes an interruption between the first one and the last two, which he composed five years later using the new technique of

integration of the time factor in the development of serial composition, which I have referred to previously. The third movement, *Grave*, has a profound dramatic intensity; the lively final *Allegro* finishes with a diminuendo on fast notes, fading away into silence: this constitutes one of the several passages of the Quartet clearly related to some effects typical of concrete and electronic music which Gerhard had begun to use in 1954, six years before their use became widespread in England.

'Nothing that strikes the ear as organised is alien to me as a musician,' Gerhard used to say. In principle, he believed that electronic music was especially valid when applied to radio, cinema, theatre and television, on account of the fact that sound montage is more adaptable to the techniques of these media than music made with traditional instruments.³ In fact, Gerhard's vision of the potential of electronic music developed considerably during the next decade, as is evident in two notable BBC talks which he gave in 1965, entitled *Sound Observed*.⁴ During this period (1954—59), Gerhard composed ten commissioned works in which he used concrete and electronic music, on its own or accompanied by an instrumental ensemble. Four of these were for the theatre (*The Prisoner*, *King Lear*, *Pericles* and *Coriolanus*), four were for the radio (*A Leak in the Universe*, *The Unexpected Country*, *Asylum Diary* and *Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter*) and two for short films (*All Aboard* and *Your Skin*).

On 27 November 1956 after our trip to England, I wrote to the Gerhards, recalling our time together in Cambridge and expressing the hope of meeting them again the following year in Zurich at the premiere of Schoenberg's opera *Moses und Awn*, conducted by Rosbaud. In the end, they could not come but, accompanied by Gomis and his wife, we attended what was indeed a superb performance. Afterwards, we met Schoenberg's daughter, Núria, who had been born in Barcelona and by then was married to the Italian composer Luigi Nono.

On 25 November 1957, Gerhard told me he and Poldi intended to spend two weeks on holiday in Pollença (Majorca) the following summer. On this occasion, they had decided to stop over briefly in Barcelona on 11-12 July, in order to go to Vails to check the possessions from their flat which were held in storage by his brother Ferran; I myself went to Vails with them. During this visit I discovered that the BBC had commissioned from him a Second Symphony, and I promised him that if at all possible, I would attend its premiere in London. He also told me that the BBC had invited him to give a talk about Webern, to be called *The Structure of a Sigh?* We discussed the issue of the magazine *The Score* dedicated to him on his 60th birthday, which contained

studies of his music by Donald Mitchell, Norman del Mar, John Gardner, Roman Vlad, David Drew, and Lawrence Picken, as well as an article of his own, 'Developments in Twelve-Tone Technique', and reproductions of his *Dos Apunts* for piano and the *Capriccio* from his First String Quartet. A catalogue of his works also appeared in this number, even though none had yet been published in England.⁶ The first Gerhard scores to appear in England were in fact brought out by Belwin Mills and Keith Prowse; more recent ones were published by Oxford University Press and Boosey & Hawkes. This single fact reveals the difficulties which, despite the recognition of the great quality of his music, he had to overcome in order to earn a living from his profession, exacerbated by the World War and political upheavals since the 1920s in his native land.

During the visit the Gerhards paid in the summer of 1957, they still spent a few days with us in Blanes. Gerhard told me in a letter of October that year, that, on his return to England, he had been requested by William Glock to give a course at Darlington Summer School. He recounted to me one of his experiences there:

I had at Darlington a group of very clever boys, like those at Darmstadt, some of them (notice I say Darmstadt as if I were talking of Cromagnon or Neanderthal Man) exponents of 'a different civilisation'. We analysed Webern's Variations op. 30, and, on pointing out some misprints (due to the printing, the proof-reader, or Webern himself), which I regarded as minor slips, one of the boys maintained that an error or omission, in his opinion, invalidates the system. Here you have the antithesis very clearly. My pupil's thesis implies that the work of art is the system. My position is diametrically opposite. The supreme art is not to compose, but to cut: the system is a scaffold for me, the essential necessary to *make*; but in order to *contemplate*, any system is not only unnecessary, but constitutes an impediment. I wanted to mention this small incident to you because I consider it symptomatic of the attitude of the most intelligent among the young generation.

In the same letter he made some interesting remarks about the interpretation of the Nonet, whose premiere we were planning to present at one of the sessions of the Club 49:

The Nonet, as you will see, is not difficult for the individual performers. The difficulty lies in the *ensemble*. The recording of the [London] performance, you will notice, leaves a lot to be desired. The only way to do it justice lies in accurate

observation of the dynamics: in this kind of micro-dynamics, the modulation of accents and intensities is constant and within a limited ambit. The dynamic indications—let's say they must be observed *with a magnifying-glass*. The last movement is not *vivo* enough (about 132 instead of 144). There are also very few dynamic indications in the score. I will complete them.

Gerhard told me in this same letter that he was in the middle of his Second Symphony. He also informed me of three concerts of his works: two performances of the Violin Concerto, one at the Royal Festival Hall with the violinist Bronislav Gimpel and the other one on French Radio with Yfrah Neaman; and a performance of the Harpsichord Concerto in London.

Meanwhile, at Club 49 we played tape-recordings of the Wind Quintet and the Piano Concerto at a concert on the 28 January 1958; we premiered the Nonet at a live concert on 16 April conducted by Josep Lluís Delas; and on 5 November we presented the recordings of his String Quartet No. 1 and the Symphony No. 1, conducted by Rosbaud.

Gerhard informed me on 2 September 1958 that on October 1 he would be moving from 5 Adams Road, to 14 Madingley Road. He also mentioned his new cello version of the Viola Sonata, wondering if I felt like playing it, and recalling the pieces we had played together when he lived in Barcelona. Finally, from his letter of 27 June 1959, it became clear that he and Poldi would not be able to take a vacation that summer, since he still had to work intensely for two or three months in order to finish the Second Symphony, whose first performance at the Royal Festival Hall was scheduled for 28 October. Besides, in July, he had the premiere of a new production of *Coriolanus* in Stratford (which had Laurence Olivier in the title-role), for which he had written the incidental music.

My wife was seriously ill during August, but she recovered in time to accompany me the following month to London for these two important premieres. It was a memorable trip, so much so that we extended it for a few more days than we had planned. We managed in addition to attend two film documentaries with concrete music by Gerhard: *Four Audiomobiles* (the second one about DNA being especially interesting), and we spent a memorable day in Cambridge at the Gerhards' new house, which had two spacious floors and a garden with plenty of fruit-trees, especially apple-trees. The study was ample and, at the back, near the window that led to the garden, there was a grand-piano with a very practical writing-table attached to it. The Gerhards used to get up very early. Poldi was tireless in taking care of the house, and garden, managing public relations as best she could, and a lot else. Robert used to go

for a morning walk during which he planned the day's work. He normally worked until lunch time, and a few more hours in the afternoon, after another walk. The rest of the time he and Poldi would talk, read, meet friends or listen to music. They tended to leave Cambridge only for work purposes. By now Gerhard had constructed an electronic laboratory in his study, with the aid of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop, and it was full of tape-loops of concrete music. While there this time, I heard recordings of his *Fantasia* for solo guitar (1957) and the superb *Chaconne* for solo violin (1959), and learned that he was planning a trip to America to teach a course of composition at Michigan University. With more and more prestigious commissions, it seemed that full recognition of the high quality of his music would enable him to concentrate on composition.

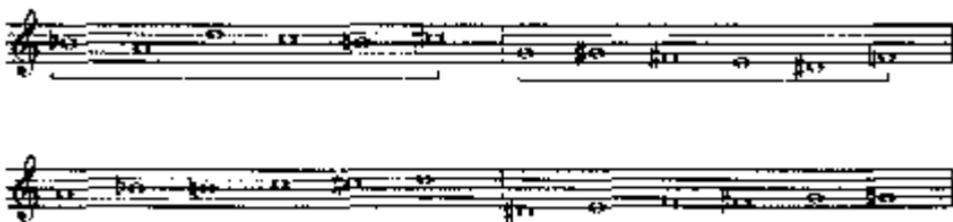
The premiere of the *Symphony No. 2* made a powerful impression on me, especially its slow movement, whose passionate questioning mood was strikingly articulated in sonic terms. Here, the percussion establishes a real dialogue with the rest of the orchestra, rather than just being used for emphasis. I remember very well the circumstances which, Gerhard explained on his return from Majorca, had suggested the sonorous atmosphere of the movement. They occurred one day while he was waiting for a bus at the roadside on the island. Amidst the silence of the countryside he could sense an inexplicable framework of light sounds, tones, colours and varied and irregular rhythms, as suggestive as they were difficult to identify. Some evoked the sound of water dripping on to the wood, others the sound of wood-blocks, sticks and castanets. The sources of all this were the noises caused by the tiny movements the wind provoked in the blades of the old wind-mills which dotted the landscape.

Another characteristic of the *Second Symphony* is that it foreshadows the single-movement works of Gerhard's last creative stage. This work, despite being written to be performed without a break, has two clearly distinguishable parts: in the first one, the *Allegro* tempo dominates; the second one begins with the slow movement, which later becomes a lively *Allegro*, comprising two sections, the second of which is the mirror of the first. Gerhard told me that the final *Allegro* should suggest the restless shining play of reflections in mercury; it seems that he was not completely pleased with the result, because during 1967-68, he began a new version of the work, giving it the title of *Metamorphoses*. In this, the final coda remains unfinished. Here he does not change the complex temporal structure at all, observing his own evolving extension of the serial relations to rhythm and metre that constitute the musical work, with the exception of timbres and sound intensities explained in this chapter.

Metamorphoses was dedicated to the memory of Rafael Patxot i Jubert, an outstanding figure in pre-war Catalonia as sponsor of folk-song compilations and composition prizes, who later ended his life in exile.

Gerhard first explored his new compositional method in the last two movements of his String Quartet No. 1. Its complete application can be found in the Nonet (for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, accordion, horn, trumpet, trombone and tuba) which he composed in 1956-57. The last two of its four movements are truly remarkable. The *Andante* is especially attractive for its melodic character, clearly related to popular song, despite the fact that it comes from the treatment of a twelve-tone series. It exudes an indescribable poetic aura throughout, similar to the one Gerhard would conjure years later in *Libra*, *Leo* and in his Symphony No. 4.

Among the other works written in the late 1950s, Gerhard's Concerto for harpsichord, strings and percussion is closely related in character to that of the Impromptus and the Piano Concerto for piano and strings. There are serial passages in its three movements, along with others disclosing a popular melodic character; the last one recalls the dance of the muleteers from the ballet *Don Quixote* and the Piano Concerto.⁷ The Chaconne for violin has eleven sections derived from the initial content of the twelve-tone series on which the whole work is based: it displays great imagination and is a superb conception in terms of the nature of the instrument. The basic series is unusual in that the two six-note scales included in each hexachord that constitute it make a single continuous chromatic scale:



To sum up, we could say that the most remarkable characteristics of Gerhard's musical output during the years 1954-59 are the following:

1. Consolidation of the practice of twelve-tone method along lines established in his earlier period: that is, using it more as a combinatory code than in a thematic sense, and making use of permutations and segmentations of the series.

2. Extension of the method to temporal relations, metre, rhythm, duration of the sequences, sections and the intrinsic form of the piece.
3. Exploration of the compositional possibilities of concrete and electronic music, and their influence on composition using traditional instruments, either separately or combining both means of sound production.

Notes

1. See Chapter V, above, p. 49.
2. Reprinted in GOM, pp. 129-137.
3. In his 1959 lecture, 'Concrete Music and Electronic Sound Composition', Gerhard remarked, '...I am mainly interested in...applied works, that is, I mean, incidental or strictly functional contributions which sound composition can bring to works of radio and television, for the stage and screen. The belief that sound-montage is more readily adaptable to such techniques than music written to traditional instruments is growing into a something of a conviction with me.' (GOM, p. 185).
4. Reprinted in GOM, pp. 187-195.
5. This does not seem to have come to fruition. Gerhard's writings on Webern, from his Barcelona and Cambridge years, can be found in GOM, pp. 142-147.
6. See *The Score*, 17 (1956).
7. Gerhard, in a notebook at CUL (10.140), mentioned that the third movement was 'comparable to Klee's *Fishers* (oil on gesso), with the linear patterns, profiles and scales brought by incision (knife) into the plaster'.

VII

1960-1970: The Final Decade

In the last phase of his creative career, from 1960 until the end of 1969, Gerhard's musical output was considerable, despite the fact that his health was affected by a chronic disease of the heart and the respiratory tract, which became worse from 1965 onwards.

During 1960-61, he travelled twice to North America to give composition courses. The first visit was to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. There, as he wrote to me, '[I] had ten sharp, enthusiastic, and "progressive" pupils: some of them are already making plans to come to Cambridge. The leading-astay has been very effective, as you can see. The human contacts are very pleasant. The New World, very interesting.' In the summer of 1961 he gave a further course at the Berkshire Music Centre at Tanglewood. During this time he met John Cage—'a clever debater,' according to Gerhard, 'who, when he saw himself cornered in argument, knew how to slip away like an eel.' As a token of good humour and affection, Gerhard dedicated to him a piece for an unlimited number of harps.'

During his two trips to the USA, he received tempting proposals from the universities to stay there. He rejected them all, not just because he felt more tied emotionally to Europe, but also because academic tasks would have limited his creative activity. Nevertheless, his visits served to introduce his music to America and as a result he also received several commissions.

Between 1960-62, he composed the Third Symphony (*Collages*), which was commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation, the String Quartet No.2, commissioned by Michigan University, and the *Concert for Eight*, dedicated to the Gomis family to inaugurate their new residence. During the following three years Gerhard composed *Hymnody* for instrumental ensemble, the cantata *The Plague* for narrator, choir and orchestra, commissioned by the BBC. and the Concerto for Orchestra for the Cheltenham Festival. Six important works, in all, in as many years.

In the same period, Gerhard also wrote music for stage, radio, TV and film. His film score for Lindsay Anderson's *This Sporting Life*, shown in Spain with the title, *El ingenuo salvaje* (*The Ingenuous Savage*) manages, with singular efficacy, concision and simplicity of means, to deepen and intensify the meaning and the emotive side of the film.²

From 1966 onwards, Gerhard was able to give up writing incidental music 'for the first time in [my] life'. Despite his poor physical condition, he composed six important and significant works: *Epithalamion* for orchestra and *Gemini* for violin and piano; in 1966; Symphony No. 4, *New York* (1961); he began the conversion of his Second Symphony into what was to be the unfinished *Metamorphoses*; *Libra* (1968) and *Leo* (1969), both for instrumental ensemble (1969); at the time of his death, he had started work on a fifth symphony and was planning a third string quartet.

These twelve main compositions have the following characteristics in common:

1. Consolidation of a tendency to compose works in a single polymorphic movement, based on the belief that in a present-day conception of music, the parts need not be separate from the whole.
2. Consolidation of a tendency towards making the melodic line less significant in determining the cohesiveness of a composition, favouring instead other structural and textural elements; that is, a transition from a linear concept to the concept of a musical 'field'. Musical values that were previously latent are now developed independently from the melody; the composer's mission is to create and regulate the succession, contrasts and inter-relations among the musical ideas that constitute the sonic current, in such a way that they manage to attract constantly the listener's attention, as already emphasised, 'carrying him from surprise to surprise, while, retrospectively, it must seem impossible that it has been able to surprise us, everything being so inevitable within the overall conception'. In several works, Gerhard alternates sections where pitch predominates with others devoid of events and passages where the protagonist is time. Examples of this are to be found in the Fourth Symphony, *Libra* and *Leo*, which have contrasts of singular poetic and emotive power.

Gerhard maintained that 'musical form' must be understood not as a noun, but as a verb: to form, to inform.³ In classical music, he said, symmetry was considered a constructive value. But this idea is wrong when applied to 'temporal' forms. Balance in musical forms bears only distant comparison to that in architecture: the parallel is purely verbal. In the experience of musical time, all relations involve transience and all realisation means implications. The development of musical form in time could be compared to a system in which its progression depends on its past; that is, on everything that has happened before, an idea which is totally foreign to the symmetry of static forms in space. These ideas also coincide with the perfect definition of 'poetic form' applicable to music which, he indicated to me in a letter dated 25

November 1957, he had found by chance in Dante's *De vulgare eloqui: una oda continua usque ad ultimum progressiva, hoc est, sine iteratione et modulationibus et sine diesi* (a continuous ode, progressing to the end; that is, with no repetitions or breaks).

Several years later, in 1977, I happened to read about the ideas of Ylia Prigogine, a Russian scientist exiled to Belgium, who had won the Nobel Prize for chemistry that year. His theories, despite referring to physical and chemical phenomena, are perfectly applicable to other fields of science and art, especially music. They seemed to me basically to coincide with Gerhard's views regarding music. Among other things he said:

The classical conception of the world insists on permanence, stability, planetary orbits, stable elemental particles, while nowadays we insist on completely different concepts; on diversity, the evolution of the universe, its history, the cosmic expansion, etc.; this is the heart of the problem. Classical science was the science of the 'being'; the modern tendency is the science of evolution, of 'becoming'. Reality does not situate itself in mere Fate, nor in necessity, but in a complex mixture of these two concepts.

Gerhard's application of serial method to the temporal organisation of later works tends to be less strict than previously, resulting, for the most part, in a higher degree of imaginative richness, metrical and rhythmical complexity. One has the impression that the method is neither imposed nor arbitrary, but deeply felt. In relation to this, it was essential to Gerhard's anti-dogmatic temperament, (something evident in his writings) that one should use a method only as a means, not as an end. The principles contribute to 'form' the work, but not to "predetermine" it. Regarding twelve-tone method, despite Schoenberg's teaching, Gerhard always preserved his independence; the proof is that only about a quarter of his works are fully serial. He had already demonstrated in 1952⁵ that the literal application, at all costs, of serial technique to all the musical parameters, would lead to an absurd academicism: and he also pointed out the necessity to reserve always a minimum of irrationality or randomness, opening onto concepts of indeterminacy and aleatoricism. On the other hand, increasing the importance of structural factors tended logically to 'divert the function of the serial method from the centre to the periphery, to the role of distant monitor of the global processes determining the overall progress of the composition', according to Gerhard's own words in his revealing article, 'The Muse and Music Today' (1962).⁶ This article begins with the following advice given by a Chinese sage to a painter: 'For ten years, paint bamboo. Then, become bamboo. In the

end, paint without thinking of bamboo.' I think that, in a certain way, this could be applied to Gerhard's musical evolution. He had painted bamboo until he felt bamboo, and finally he painted it without thinking of it.

Gerhard's Third Symphony (*Collages*) was composed during 1960, the same year he travelled to Michigan. Its premiere took place the following year in London, with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Rudolph Schwartz. This work, in one movement divided into seven sections, was first called *Collages*, because it features taped sounds prepared by the composer himself integrated into the orchestral sonority; in some cases, they add to the timbral possibilities of the percussion instruments, and in others, they acquire a foreground role serving like instrumental cadences in pieces of a *concertante* character. As happens in many of Gerhard's works, stimuli from the contemplation of life and nature had a great importance in the creation and development of the composition. In this case, very specifically, they come from the impressions received during his trips to and from America by plane. Here, he described returning from the USA when, flying at about 30,000 feet above the rolling clouds, he witnessed a sunrise that was 'like the blast of 10,000 trumpets'.



Gerhard in Cambridge in 1960

The piece begins with the sunrise and finishes evoking dusk. It seems that, before coming up with the definitive title, he had considered calling it *Laudes*, thinking of the third verse of Psalm 113, 'From the rising of the sun until the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised.' The second section of the Symphony (*Lento*), bring us down to earth, and suggests the fascinating life of the plants, trees and flowers swayed by the wind. Gerhard commented that he was 'haunted by a feeling that trees and flowers in wind-still moments seem rapt in silent awareness of the numinous, more moving than anything that is audible.' The third (*Allegro con brio*) shows the world of man, 'with the darkness at noon, with his despair, his rage, his pity, his defeat'. The central section (*Moderato*) is the only one where taped sounds are absent: Gerhard wrote that in retrospect it seemed to him to relate to the activities in the mind of someone who has lost consciousness. The fifth section (*Vivace*) represents a return to reality. The sixth (*Allegretto*) is analogous to the second, and was suggested by an aerial view of villages and towns lighting up at night. The last one (*Calmo*) is a very subjective evocation of the night; its closing bars, according to the composer, are written in the first person singular.

Gerhard began composing his String Quartet No. 2 in Michigan, and finished it in Cambridge between 1960-61. It was premiered in Ann Arbor by the Stanley Quartet in 1962, and in London in 1963 by the Parrenin Quartet, who also gave the first performance in Barcelona under the auspices of Música Oberta. Five years later, the Parrenin Quartet played it at the the 1968 ISCM Festival. This highly original and imaginative work is also composed, like Gerhard's Third Symphony, in a single movement in seven sections; but in the quartet, instead of the contrasts proceeding from different exterior stimuli, they come from the structural differences of three kinds of sonic continuity.

The first section is characterised by a high degree of chance; tone-colour plays here an important role. In the second, the protagonist is 'time'; the tone remains static or becomes more indeterminate through the adoption of unusual procedures in order to generate it. A characteristic of this type of continuity is the virtual suspension of metre and a freedom of tempo typical of the spirit of pre-classical music. The colourful effects of the Second Quartet anticipate those of certain contemporary Polish composers, such as Lutoslawski and Penderecki; the vitality, overflowing imagination and rhythmical richness that characterise Gerhard's music, are extraordinarily emphasised.

The *Concert for Eight*, which he completed in 1962, was scored for a very unusual instrumental ensemble, comprising flute, clarinet, accordion, mandolin, guitar, percussion, piano and double-bass. Here he carries the ideas

and innovations of the String Quartet No. 2 still further. According to the composer:

My intention was to write a piece of chamber music in the nature of a Divertimento, almost in the spirit of the *commedia deli'arte*. The eight instruments are introduced somewhat in the manner of *dramatis personae*, but the play itself consists of purely musical events, and must not be taken as evoking or illustrating any extra-musical parallels whatever.

From the conventions of the *commedia*, two have been adopted: that of extempore invention and, sometimes, that of disguise or masking—by which I mean unusual ways of playing instruments. The piece falls into eight sections, which are played without a break.

Concertfor Eight was premiered in London in 1962 by the Melos Ensemble, conducted by Jacques-Louis Monod, and in Barcelona at the new house of the Gomis family in Gavà, along with Gerhard's *Seven Haiku*, a work by Josep Mestres-Quadreny and another one by myself, expressly written for the occasion. Later on, two more performances of the *Concertfor Eight*, conducted by Alain Milhaud, were given at the Saló Tinell, and at the French Institute in Barcelona, sponsored by Música Oberta; later, in 1978, it was performed by the Grup Instrumental Català, conducted by Carles Santos.

During February and March 1963, Gerhard composed *Hymnody*, commissioned by the BBC, whose premiere took place on 23 May that same year, with the Melos Ensemble once again. It is also a composition in one single movement made up of nine, sharply contrasting sections. The scoring is for flute (and piccolo), oboe, clarinet, horn, trumpet, trombone, two pianos and two percussionists. In the preface to the score Gerhard wrote:

My head was full of psalms during work on this piece. I am moved, refreshed, sometimes agonised by the word of the Psalmist, yet I cannot say that I was ever conscious in my mind of any correspondence between a musical image and any poetic image in particular. If, in spite of this, I have quoted two verses from the Book of Psalms—one on the first page of the score and one on the last—it was not in order to relate them specifically to the musical context, but rather in order to indicate symbolically an imaginative climate and, above all, in order to testify to the nature of the involvement that made me write this work.

The first quotation comes from Psalms 22, verse 12: '...strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round'; the second from Psalm 88, verse 12: 'Shall thy wonders be known in the dark?' [Vulgate references: Psalms 21, v. 13-14; Psalm 87, v. 13].

The first performance of *Hymnody* in Barcelona took place in 1968 at the Saló Tinell, under the auspices of Música Oberta; the second one in the 1970 International Music festival of Barcelona.

On 30 August 1963, Gerhard told me that he and Poldi had decided to come and spend two or three weeks in Sitges, starting from the middle of September, since the sun had not appeared that summer in Cambridge, and they needed to get supplies of 'solar vitamins' in order to finish the many tasks Robert had undertaken to complete during the winter. Among them, he had to finish *The Plague*, and eighty minutes of incidental music for orchestra, soprano, and female choir for the radio dramatisation of *The Anger of Achilles*, by the poet and novelist, Robert Graves, then a long-time resident in Majorca.⁷

During this latest visit, I had the chance to talk to Gerhard about his activities of the last years and his projects for the future. We met several times in Barcelona, on one occasion accompanied by Joan Prats and the composer Josep M. Mestres-Quadreny,⁸ who had always held his music in high regard. I also went to visit them in Sitges, and from there I accompanied them, once again, to visit his brother Ferran, in Vails. During the journey he showed me the *masia* (farmhouse) at which he had decided to write to Schoenberg forty years earlier.

On 2 March 1964 he wrote to me to acknowledge receipt and give his comments on the recording of the concert given in the new residence of our friends Ricard and Agnès Gomis in Gavà; he added that, at last, he had punctually carried out the laborious commission of the radio adaptation of Graves's work, having finished his cantata *The Plague* at the beginning of January. At the end of March, before the rehearsals of the cantata, he had to attend those for the *Don Quixote* Dances and for the First Symphony, conducted by Antal Dorati, in preparation for the recording of these two works.

On 1 April 1964, the world premiere of *The Plague* took place at the Royal Festival Hall in London. I attended with three friends from Barcelona, Ricard Gomis, Raimon Tort and Enric Gispert. We were greatly impressed by the work. Its dramatic impact was even more evident in the Barcelona performances given in 1980 at the Palau de la Música Catalana—a smaller hall that allowed the performers to be closer to the audience. In order to express, within the 42 minutes' duration of the Cantata, the fundamental sense of the narration, Gerhard concentrates the multiplicity of characters involved into two protagonists: the narrator, who explains the story and reactions to it, and the choir, which personifies the people affected by the plague. The impersonally neutral tone in which Camus's narration is written justifies the treatment given by

Gerhard. According to him, melodrama must never be treated melodramatically. The narrator's voice is regarded in the work as almost a musical element, heard in the context of other choral components, and all combined in a single inclusive sonorous design.

To achieve his aims, Gerhard follows paths explored in his Third Symphony (*Collages*), which had integrated electronic and instrumental music. Here he tried new ways of integration, using the voices and some of the orchestral instruments to produce indefinite sounds or special characteristically vocal effects. The cantata has nine sections based on the most significant events of the narration. The choir and the narrator interact with the orchestra, which shapes the general course of the composition, thus enhancing the original sense and message of Camus's text.⁹

During 1964, Gerhard was commissioned to compose an orchestral piece for the 1965 Cheltenham Festival—his Concerto for Orchestra. This work was, in fact, premiered in Boston (USA) on 25 April 1964 by the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati, and performed later in the Cheltenham Festival on 9 July by the same orchestra, conducted by Norman del Mar. Concertos in the twentieth century have tended to emphasise the wide soloistic potential of the orchestra, as opposed to the romantic type with one soloist pitted against the orchestra. Gerhard's Concerto is in a single movement in which there is an alternation of the three different types of continuity I referred to when describing his String Quartet No. 2: in the orchestral compass of this superb piece, they acquire an extraordinary significance and explore a great variety of imaginative textures. A few months after its premiere, we were able to listen to a recording of the piece, during the visit that the Gerhards made to Barcelona and Ibiza in October 1965. The ideas germinated in his previous works really acquire full expansion in the Concerto for Orchestra, and, in my opinion, reach their culmination in the Fourth Symphony and the chamber symphonies *Libra* and *Leo*.

When Gerhard set out for his vacation in Ibiza, I remember that the respiratory difficulties from which we noticed he had been suffering since 1965 had become worse, owing to a heart lesion that made him limit strictly his physical activity. Our mutual friend Joan Prats had organised their trip to the island, accommodating them at the beautifully located house of the architect Josep Lluís Sert. My wife and I accompanied them on the outward journey, staying at an apartment that Joan Prats owned near the Serts' residence, so that we could be closer to them and go on excursions together during the first week. I have pleasant memories of that trip because my wife, whose health was already

delicate, felt very well in the atmosphere and weather of the island. However, the Gerhards found their stay rather distressing because the entrance to Sert's house implied walking along a badly paved section of road near the coast, along which cab-drivers often refused to drive. Gerhard suffered considerable fatigue as a result, and his ability to get about with his wife was thus limited. We therefore agreed that they should spend their next vacation on the Costa Brava at an hotel situated at the north end of the Platja d'Aro near the sea, where we had enjoyed part of our holidays in previous years. On that visit Gerhard told me that the American violin and piano duo formed by Morris and Silvia Hochberg had commissioned from him a work which he first called *Duo Concertante*, but later changed to *Gemini*. He also mentioned that among the radio music the BBC had recently commissioned from him, he believed his score for an adaptation of Hemingway's novel *For Whom the Bells Tolls* would be especially appreciated. During 1965, the first recording devoted to his music was released, including the Dances from the ballet *Don Quixote* and the First Symphony, superbly conducted by Antal Dorati. This same record was reproduced the following year in Barcelona to form part of the Historical Anthology of Catalan Music issued by EDIGSA.

During his stay we also talked about the project that a Barcelona publishing house had of bringing out a compilation of his Catalan writings and later English writings to coincide with his 70th birthday the following year. There was also a separate plan to publish his writings in English, and for a concert devoted to his works, in which he himself would conduct *Hymnody*—something he was not sure he would be capable of doing, owing to his delicate state of health.

On 19 February 1966, he wrote:

I am sending you the preface, apologising for the delay for reasons you can guess: urgent work on an orchestral piece called *Epithalamion*, and the first complete sketch of a secular cantata based on a medieval latin lyric (superb), an English poem, two by Salvat-Papasseit and one by the great American poet, e.e. cummings.

If the editor likes the Preface, you should tell me what further is needed for me to continue the compilation of writings.

Very little news, but all good. The concert on the 2nd in the Royal Festival Hall with the Concerto for Orchestra had a sensational audience and press success. I have three commissions from America: a private one (the Duo Concertante for violin and piano which I talked to you about), a symphonic work for the commemoration of the 125th Anniversary of the foundation of the

New York Philharmonic, and a chamber work for the University of New Hampshire; altogether, it will allow me, for the first time in my life, to reject any type of 'commercial' work that turns up. By the way, that Italian prize for a radio work, we won it!! "

On 20 April he wrote proposing to add to the compilation of articles in Catalan, some of the sketches preserved from the time he had spent in Paris, Meudon and Cambridge, between 1939-43. He also suggested *Writings and Sketches* as the title for the book. Unfortunately, this work never appeared during his lifetime, because the publisher was in financial difficulties.¹²

Despite his medical problems, during the last three years of his life, Gerhard composed some of his best works, which, apart from *Libra*, the Fourth Symphony and *Leo*, included *Epithalamion* for large orchestra and *Gemini*, which can be singled out for its originality and virtuoso writing, its colour and expressive power. In relation to this composition, finished at the beginning of August 1966, Gerhard said in a prefatory note to the score:

The work consists of a series of contrasting episodes, whose sequence is more like a braiding of diverse strands than to a lineal development. Except for the concluding episodes, nearly every one recurs more than once, generally, in a different context. These recurrences are not like refrains, and do not fulfil anything remotely like the function of the classical refrain. Rather might they be compared to thought persistently returning to some main topic.

In a letter sent on 27 July, he told me that he was completing *Gemini* which had to be premiered on 24 September, informing me that he would soon send the programme notes for his two String Quartets, which the Parrenin Quartet was to play in the Barcelona International Music Festival the following autumn. He also commented on the proposal from a publishing house in Barcelona to produce a book about him to for a series devoted to pioneer figures in Catalan artistic and scientific activity. The idea of being pigeon-holed in a certain technical tendency did not please him very much. He told me:

It's as if—let us suppose—a book on Picasso were published today: *Picasso, Cubist Painter*. Naturally, Cubism has never stopped influencing his later development, like serialism has influenced mine. But as a definite adjective—in both senses of the word—the term is not sufficient. The fact is, in my opinion, that I have been anti-orthodox from the beginning. Consult my article, 'Tonality in Twelve-Tone Music' in the magazine *The Score* of May, 1952. Serialism

was likely to produce an academicism of the most sterile kind; I already felt it in my bones fourteen years ago, and I was right. For the first time (as far as I know), in the article referred to, a minimum of 'chance' was required as a vital necessity: it is the basic concept from which 'indeterminacy' and the idea of aleatory music have emerged. But if Cage, Boulez or Stockhausen were to read me, they would not understand. They repeated the same error, almost exactly, as they had fallen into when applying Schoenberg's twelve-tone serial idea (an exclusively tonal idea) to rhythm, that is, to the temporal domain; they applied it literally, not translated, transported, imaginatively adapted to the temporal dimension. This is at the root of the infantile nature of the first book of [Boulez's] *Structures*, as an experiment as music *tout court* it is much better, but we know that, with imagination, an artist can create good works, even if he believes in absurd theories. We will talk about it.

Finally, he expressed the hope that my wife had recovered completely during our holidays. Unfortunately, the truth, soon to be revealed in all its harshness, was very different: her illness was incurable.

The following December my mother died. Gerhard sent his condolences and mentioned that Poldi was suffering articulatory pains in her joints, as a consequence of a bicycle accident. Despite the setback, he—the one, according to his doctor, who was in the more delicate health—kept on working hard on the Fourth Symphony. Gerhard also told me that 'by an irony of fate' he had been awarded an honour—Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

On 31 March 1967 he commented on the tapes I had sent him of his two string quartets and my Sixth Quartet, which had been included in the 1966 International Music Festival of Barcelona. He told me that he had suffered lately from an acute bronchitis which had kept him out of action for more than five weeks: only then was he able to continue composition of the Fourth Symphony, whose premiere was scheduled for 14 December in New York.

On 17 April he wrote again telling me that he and Poldi had made a booking for May 1 at the Costa Brava hotel which we had recommended to them. They did not know the truth about my wife's illness until I went to meet them at the airport with my friend Prats, who then accompanied them to Platja d'Aro by car. They gave me an art-book for my wife, thinking that she was already convalescent. But the following morning, in fact, I had to take her to hospital, and early on 7 May she passed away. A few days later I went with my daughter to the hotel where the Gerhards were staying, full of pleasant memories for me of the happy days I had spent there with my wife. Even though I knew those

memories would provide little consolation, the company of the Gerhards helped me greatly to endure the following days of profound sadness.

During their stay in Platja d'Aro, Ricard and Joaquim Gomis came to visit us with some relatives of theirs, and Joan Prats. Gerhard told them about the BBC television project for a documentary about his life and musical works.¹⁵ He asked Joaquim Gomis (an excellent photographer) and Joan Prats (who composed sequences with his friend's pictures, making books and series of slide-projections with the name 'fotoscops') to assist the BBC TV camera-men in the filming of scenes in Vails and Barcelona. This project was carried out with important modifications when Gerhard was still alive, and the broadcast was repeated after his death.

The following 12 October he wrote to me:

Dear Joaquim: you must have found it strange, obviously, that I have not replied yet to your distressing letter from last June, to which an immediate reply seemed the only possible reaction. However, you must understand the difficult situation I was in: suddenly, I noticed a miscalculation that could have endangered the premiere of the new piece, commissioned by the New York Philharmonic. They insisted on receiving the musical score by the 1st September, and I finished it last Sunday, despite having worked non-stop, even on Sundays, since our return from the Costa Brava and—(here you have the explanation for my silence)—because I decided, much to my sorrow, not to write any letters at all. Despite everything, as I say, I am more than a month late, in part because the piece, after I returned from Catalonia, started to grow twigs on the branches that were not even on the trunk of the tree when I measured it before I began; in part, also, because of the inevitable waste of days during which I was needed in London. There were several reasons for this. One you might find interesting is that *Collages* is going to be performed at the Royal Albert Hall, after numerous rehearsals, and a stereo recording made; and, as a consequence of the unexpectedly positive response from the audience at the Proms, HMV decided to make a recording of it and offered to pay for everything. The record is not likely to come out before the Spring, since they want a [Roger] Sessions work on the other side, which means, they think, they will not have any difficulty in finding an American sponsor. After having struggled with the BBC for over six years to present a second performance of the piece, it seems ironical to hear the director of HMV say that they believe *Collages* will be a commercial success!

Nevertheless, the other side of the coin has been very different. Poldi has had two serious car accidents; every blow has paralysed me completely; as a result

of the second accident she will have her left arm completely immobilised until Christmas, they say; with her impatient nature it is a torture, and for me, a hard task to make her obey and prevent her from getting up to her old tricks.

Despite everything, we have thought about you; we talk about you and poor Pietat all the time. I suppose you will leave, or have left already, the flat in the Barri de Sant Gervasi; it might sound a cruel piece of advice, but it is a sacrifice I am sure to be imperative. However painful it may be, the only thing you can do is to face up to reality. Gather strength from weakness, you cannot doubt that a spirit like Pietat's, which was also creative, would never wish your separation to cause your own creativity to dry up. Indeed, she would have considered it an unacceptable weakness, almost an act of treason. The spiritual strength which can emerge from tragedy is incalculable; the paradox seems natural; at bottom, only this strength can help heal the wound; I am sure there must be a mystery of grace involved in this paradox, and I think it would be terrible not to perceive it.

It took me nine years to follow his advice to leave the apartment, but I had already restarted composing music before I received his letter. The first piece I wrote, during summer 1967, was *Presències*, seven movements for orchestra, whose motivation was directly linked to my recent circumstances. Soon after, I composed a Wind Octet; the following year a Trio and the Seventh String Quartet. In the same concert of the cycle of performances of contemporary music organized by Música Oberta at the Saló Tinell during spring 1968, for which I composed the Octet, Robert Gerhard's *Hymnody* was given its Spanish premiere, conducted by Konstantin Simonovich. In Madrid they also premiered his *Libra*, conducted by J.M. Franco Gil.

On 12 September 1968 Gerhard told me that he and Poldi had thought of arriving in Barcelona the following 18th to go straightaway to the hotel in Platja d'Aro, where they had stayed the previous year, warning me, however, that this time they would travel incognito and, therefore, they did not want me to tell anyone. My daughter and I went to meet them at the airport, and from there we went straight to the Costa Brava. Our first setback happened when we arrived at the hotel and were told that they did not have available the rooms that had been booked, the same ones as the previous year, on the ground floor. The Gerhards had to stay instead at a nearby residence: it was very well located, facing the sea, but the elevator up to their room worried them. We had an apartment two or three kilometres from where they were staying, but they could not use it because it had no lift, and Gerhard's doctor had forbidden him any kind of physical exertion.

We used to go swimming with Poldi, while Robert read in the gardens of the residence. We met up again for meals. I still remember a dinner at which a couple, sitting at a table near ours, became intrigued because they heard us speaking sometimes in three languages (Catalan, English and German), and were thus curious about our friends' nationality. They too turned out to be a married couple of mixed nationality (he was Catalan and she was American) and they invited us to visit them in the house they had near the sea, very close to the Gerhards' residence. It was a modern house, decorated in very good taste; in the course of our conversation we talked about Marshall MacLuhan's theories which; at that time, were not well known in our country.

A second setback resulted from the delay in the publishing of Gerhard's book. The situation reached a point where Gerhard decided to rescind the contract with the publishers. This coincided, moreover, with a third setback: Poldi suffered an acute pharyngitis during the last days they spent in Platja d'Aro, which, added to the pains still caused by the injuries she had suffered in her road accident, made her very nervous. In consequence, our farewells were very sad, as if we had a premonition that they would be our last. The only person they visited was Dr Trueta,¹⁶ living in Santa Cristina d'Aro, whom they wanted to consult about Poldi's injuries. Nevertheless, despite all the setbacks, we had some enjoyable times. We celebrated Robert's election as Doctor *Honoris Causa* by Cambridge University on 6 June 1968; we talked about his last works, the most recent innovations and explorations including the use of computers; we discussed also the books we had read lately and the works and projects we were planning. After our farewell, on the 19 October, I received a telegram from Gerhard in which he confirmed the cancellation of the contract with the publishers for his book. He refused completely to allow me to negotiate with any other publisher.

I received no further letters from him. Despite his opposition, a few months later, I decided, along with our mutual friend Joan Prats, to negotiate the publishing of the book with another house. I informed him of this and he never replied; however, I knew later that he had written directly to the publishing house for a contract. When he received it, his illness had become irreversible, and after his death in Cambridge on 5 January 1970, his wife refused to sign it. Soon after, the executors of his Estate requested the return of all the manuscripts and photographs that were to be used in the book.

Notes

1. Gerhard's *Claustrophobia: A Page for John Cage* was his response to a letter from Cage, dated 24 January 1966, requesting a contribution to his forthcoming collection, *Notations*, the proceeds from which would go to a Foundation for Contemporary Performing Arts. Gerhard's work is for eight harps—or as many multiples of 4 as available—and 4 backstage radio sets, tuned to different wavelengths, monitors backstage and loudspeakers. The score bears three remarks:

'The medium is the message.' (Marshall McLuhan)

'Performance is composition.' (Marshall McLuhan)

'Rehearsal is a fraud.' (Robert Gerhard)

Gerhard also noted in the score:

It will be apparent that the philosophy of composition followed here is mainly characterised by its strong choice—bias. In effect: rather than indeterminate or improvisatory, it is probing—conjectural, goal-setting, in other words, stochastic rather than aleatory.

To put it plainly: *corrigos lafortuna* [leaving everything to chance] is all [perfectly] fair in art whenever you've got the chance. So, to every chance a choice, and Alea for All!

Gerhard also wrote:

Despite its undeniable shortcomings, I am not for scrapping notation in favour of diagrams, doodlings or *musikalische Graphik*: substitutes obviously designed to overcome that remarkable contemporary malaise which we might call 'pitch-fatigue'. Since it never affected me, I naturally give pitch pride of place among *matèria musica's* prime constituents.

Notation's ambiguities are its saving grace. Fundamentally, notation is a serviceable device for coping with imponderables. Precision is never of the essence in creative work.

Subliminal man (the real creative boss) gets along famously with material of such low definition, that any self-respecting computer would have to reject it as unprogrammable.

2. For a different view, see Lindsay Anderson, *This Sporting Life* in *Tempo* 139 (December 1981), pp. 33-34.

3. This a constant theme throughout Gerhard's writings. See especially GOM, p. 42-43.

4. Homs read about Prigogine's theories in one of the regular articles on science in the newspaper *La Vanguardia*.

5. See 'Tonality in Twelve-Tone Music', in GOM, pp. 116-128.

6. Reprinted in GOM, pp. 216-225.

7. See note 11 below.

8. Josep Maria Mestres-Quaderny (born 1929, Manresa) is one of the most important composers of the post-war generation in Catalonia. He has worked professionally as a

chemist while pursuing a musical career. He founded the Música Oberta series at Club 49 in 1960 and helped form the Conjunt Català de Música Contemporània in 1968, an electronic music laboratory, Phonos, in 1973 and the Grup Instrumental Català in 1976. Non-conformist and experimental by inclination, he has specialised in electronic music and aleatory scores, notably in the series of six concertos collectively entitled *Lestro aleatòria* (1973-76).

9. See GOM, pp. 196-198.

10. Joan Salavat-Papasseit was born in Barcelona in 1894 and died there in 1924. An avant-garde poet and radical intellectual, his influence bridged the visionary, experimental and mainstream currents in Catalan culture of the early twentieth century. See *Selected Poems* (translated with an Introduction by Dominic Keown and Tom Owen), ACSOP series No. 2 (1982).

11. Gerhard's music for a radio production of Robert Graves's *The Anger of Achilles* won the 1964 Italia prize.

12. See below p. 78 and also Appendix 2, pp. 97-113.

13. Reprinted in GOM, pp. 116-128.

14. The term 'aleatory music' (deriving from *alea* = a dice-throw) is music in which chance is allowed to dictate either the process of composition or aspects of performance or both. These procedures decide, for example, the order in which sections of a piece are to be performed: and the use of graphic notation enhances the possibilities for randomness. The key figure in its development is John Cage, whose *Music of Changes* (1951) was the first composition deliberately determined by random procedures. In the 1950s Cage's ideas exerted a great influence on European figures such as Boulez and Stockhausen, and the Polish avant-garde, led by Lutoslawski.

15. *The Explorers: a film in praise of Robert Gerhard and his music*. Directed by Barrie Gavin (BBC, 1969).

16. Josep Trueta (1897-1977) rose to prominence as a surgeon in Barcelona during the 1920s. A fervent liberal, he was opposed to the Franco regime and emigrated with his young family to England in 1939. During the Second World War, he was much in demand on account of his experience in treating the victims of air raids, becoming an adviser on the subject to the Ministry of Health. From 1942 until the end of the war, he was in charge of the accident department of the Radcliffe Infirmary and in 1949 was appointed Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at Oxford. In 1946 he published *The Spirit of Catalonia*, a unique collection of biographies of Catalan medical men and philosophers, examining their contribution to Western civilisation. He returned to Barcelona in 1967 where, a few days before his death, the future King Juan Carlos I bestowed upon him the prestigious Gran Cruz de Carlos III. His memoirs, *Trueta: A Surgeon in War and Peace*, were published posthumously in 1980.

VIII

Postlude

Gerhard's death prompted a number of commemorative concerts and tributes. On 23 January 1970, the BBC broadcast four of his last works: his Concerto for Orchestra, Fourth Symphony, *Libra* and *Leo*. Two London promoters of contemporary music, the Macnaghten Concerts and Park Lane Group, jointly presented a Memorial Concert on 5 March. This included Gerhard's *Cantares* for voice and guitar, *Gemini*, *Libra*, *Capriccio* for flute and his Nonet for wind instruments. The programme included an up-to-date catalogue of his works by David Drew.

In Barcelona, Música Oberta dedicated to him their first concert on 11 March 1970 at the Chapel of Santa Àgata, the programme consisting of: *Dos Apunts* and Three Impromptus for piano, *Seven Haiku* and the Spanish premiere of *Libra*. Later on, in the International Festival of Barcelona in October, three of his works were featured—the Third Symphony, *Hymnody* and *Leo*.

Gerhard's friend, Dr Trueta, attended the concert at the Santa Àgata Chapel, and, knowing of my closeness to the composer and his wife, gave me a photocopy of the death-certificate¹ which I sent to Poldi. Dr Trueta also gave me a photocopy of the letter of condolence sent by Gerhard's cardiologist, Dr Fleming, to his widow. He wrote to her that, if during the last years her husband had been able to live and compose, this was only due to his great mental strength, his courage and stamina, and the devoted assistance she gave him. For this reason, he had always felt enormous admiration and constant surprise at the fact that Gerhard could continue working in the state he was in. 'It is very sad,' he said, that he cannot compose any more, 'but it is wonderful that he was able to produce so much during the last years.'

Dr Trueta himself and a friend of mine from Manchester sent me photocopies of several obituaries that appeared in the English press.² In Barcelona, also, obituaries and tributes by music critics and composers were published. I myself wrote an article on Gerhard in the magazine *Serra d' Or*³ and another one in *Imagery sonido*.⁴ One of the most personal tributes to Gerhard came from his friend and supporter, Sir William Clock, broadcast on BBC Radio 3. He began by quoting a letter from Gerhard, following upon Clock's radio talk about him, in September 1966, when Gerhard was 70:

I can't think that you'll find it difficult to believe that I am writing you these lines in some state of trepidation. Thank you and thank you very sincerely for the birthday broadcast. This is as far as I know what to say...the rest is confusion, my confusion!

You know (and this might be an extenuating circumstance) that I have had practically no experience of this sort of thing in my whole life. I know, there have been sporadic exceptions to the rule. But the fact is that I find it difficult to believe that anything about me *does matter*—there are, and have been, occasional suspensions of disbelief, if I may thus express it—and what a wonderful heart-warming sensation it is! But the experience is essentially fleeting, it never seems to grow into a cumulative state of affairs, inducing, as it were, a sort of permanent unflappable state of self-assurance. It is pretty much like knowing that your bank account is worth exactly what you put in with the last cheque, with a margin of, say, £75 overdraft. You have managed to make me feel well-to-do for the day and for the time being. I wish it would last, perhaps I shouldn't. Doubt is not negative—*le doute mène à la forme*—as Valéry said.

Glock continued:

Doubt is a harbinger of form. It is a characteristic letter, reminiscent of the talk which used to flow for hours on end if one visited him at Cambridge. Those visits are never to be forgotten: first, because one was enveloped in an atmosphere of extraordinary happiness that arose from his truly poetic devotion to his wife, and hers to him; and, secondly, because one learnt so much and ranged with him over so many fields of interest—discussions of his favourite authors, disquisitions on biology and cybernetics, the Spanish Civil War, and Spanish proverbs as befitted the occasion ('If you write an angry letter, walk slowly towards the mail-box')—, but, really, anything that he was bursting with at that particular moment. Always there were memorable statements on music and contemporary problems, embedded in a general exposition, which seemed to be a mixture of logic and improvisation, of matters carefully considered and, on the other hand, of brilliant inventions of the moment. He was that rare type of composer who is able to reflect clearly and profoundly on the principles of his art, and very often, on reaching home, I used to write down some of the remarks that he had made. Over one of them, I made a thoughtless blunder, and it found its way into print: 'Genius is superhuman attention.' A very strange statement, to say the least; but it was a long time before he mentioned the matter. Even then he upbraided me gently—perhaps himself remembering the Spanish proverb I quoted just now: 'Shouldn't it have been: "Inspiration is superhuman attention?"'. Of course it should.'

I did not see Poldi again until November 1973, when I attended the memorable series of London concerts devoted to the chamber music of Schoenberg and Gerhard, superbly planned and executed by the London Sinfonietta, conducted by David Atherton. On that occasion, my daughter and I spent an unforgettable day with Poldi in Cambridge. We visited Gerhard's grave under the shadow of some Mediterranean pine trees, the studio in which he had written his most important works and the house where, supported by his wife, he had died, still mentally lucid. I invited her repeatedly to spend some time with us, but she always excused herself saying that she did not dare confront the impact of suddenly reviving so many memories. Instead, she found solace carrying flowers to her husband's grave, which is not far from her house; and there she told him, in her imagination, what had happened to her every day since death had separated them.

Notes

1. Gerhard's death was attributed to 'acute pulmonary edema, ischamich myocardial infection and emphysema'.

2. For further tributes to Gerhard, see also: David Drew, 'Roberto Gerhard' in *The Listener* 83 (15 January, 1970), p. 94; Norman Kay, 'Late Harvest' in *Music and Musicians* (October 1970), p. 36; Colin Mason, 'Gerhard's Years of Fulfilment' in *Daily Telegraph* (24 January, 1970), p. 8; Ates Orga, 'Roberto Gerhard 1896-1970' in *Music and Musicians* 19 (October 1970), p. 36; Desmond Shawe-Taylor, 'Gerhard's Greatness' in *Sunday Times* (11 January, 1970); W.H. Thorpe, 'Roberto Gerhard' in *The Times* (January 14, 1970), p. 12.

3. *Serra d'Or*, 125 (15 November, 1970).

4. *Imagen y sonido*, 106 (April 1972).

5. William Clock's broadcast was reprinted in his autobiography, *Notes in Advance* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 176-178. I have substituted this for Homs's quotation of the original, by kind permission of the author and his publishers, Oxford University Press.



Last photograph of Gerhard and Poldi together, Costa Brava, 1968

IX

Epilogue

In the preceding chapters, I have traced Gerhard's life and work through its main stages, through my own reflections and experiences, through those of other musical personalities with whom Gerhard was involved in England, and within his own writings. Now I shall try to summarise what seem to me to be his main contributions to contemporary music.

In the first place, in general, one should observe that all the variations that happen in art originate in directing attention towards one or other of the elements that constitute artistic creation. In the case of music these are melody (tune), rhythm, harmony, timbre, the intensities and source of the sounds and, at a higher level, ways of combining them, ordering the sonic flow in time. The temperament of each creator leads him to explore the possibilities for development of one or the other of these elements. Or he will be specifically interested in the balanced integration of possibilities that can be exploited in various different areas: not only for incidental effects, but to obtain structural and textural contrasts that contribute to the diversification and temporal unfolding of the work. Gerhard was undoubtedly in this latter category, despite having always been alert to research regarding new possibilities over a wide range of parameters and their assimilation in music. I should point out the following:

1. In the melodic and harmonic domain, he was inclined towards a completely athenatic utilisation of the twelve-tone series: that is, as a simple combinatory code of intervallic relations, allowing a great variety of figuration, and even the complete integration, within the twelve-tone network, of all sorts of melodies, including those of a popular character, together with the creation of tone-clusters and an inexhaustible variety of sonorous dimensions.
2. From his first to his last works, we find great metric and rhythmic complexity; in his later works, this meant the imaginative transposition of serial methods to metre, rhythm and the intrinsic temporal format of the composition.
3. His exploration of colour and timbre increased notably when he engaged in the production of concrete and electronic music, a realm in which he was a pioneer in England.

4. His conception of musical form was not 'nominal' (i.e. noun-related) but, rather, verbal: formation on-going in time.
5. Gerhard insisted on the necessity to decide upon a method, be it the serial one, adapted, with variations of his own, from Schoenberg; or others, mathematical for instance, that would serve at the same time as a stimulus for new experience, and as a guard against the erratic nature of thought; imposing freely selected boundaries upon the unlimited scope available to the composer today, and thus avoiding the impression that when everything is possible, nothing seems necessary.

Regarding the predominant characteristics of his works, I think that three are to be singled out:

1. Its dramatic character, devoid of expressionist exteriorisations, but understood as an inexhaustible longing for knowledge, even when fully conscious of the fact that there are no final answers to the questions we ask ourselves endlessly.
2. Its contemplative character, as the musical expression of a love for life and nature.
3. Its dynamic character, as the expression of happiness, energy or vital anxiety, and as a desire to explore the unusual.

Within these three general characteristics, all the works of Gerhard reflect his temperament, demanding yet anti-dogmatic, and they have a clarity, colour and luminosity typical of his Mediterranean roots.

Nothing better illustrates this than his last compositions—the Fourth Symphony, *Libra* and *Leo*. In each of these works there is an important, individual episode, that seems to fuse the rest in a prodigious and indescribable balance—an expression of the composer's singular genius. Note, for example, in the Fourth Symphony, the passage where two oboes play a popular-style melody accompanied by quiet, rhythmic sonorities produced by the strings *col legno*, the interactions of percussion instruments and, more sporadically, celesta, harp and piano:

Gerhard Symphony No. 4

♩ = 60

Violin 1
Violin 2
Clarinet
Bassoon
Flute
Piccolo
Violin 1
Violin 2

mf cresc. rit. dim.
pp
mf
pp
p
pp
p
mf
p
mf
p
p

In *Libra* (Gerhard's zodiac sign), this culminating point occurs in the unforgettable final section of ninety-three bars, in which, on a pedal *ostinato* in the lowest register of the piano, he superposes a magically balanced series of sonorous layers with different shades of expressive character, periodically crossed by the timpani *glissandi*, prolonged by the guitar, against which we hear the undulating melody of the clarinet, punctuated by violin *glissandi* and some melodic commentary from the piccolo:

Gérard Luby

Clarinet in A

Guitar

Trombone

Percussion

Piano

Large Cymbal

mf

pp

p

mp

mf

This system of the musical score includes five staves. The Clarinet in A staff (top) shows a melodic line starting with a *pp* dynamic. The Guitar staff has a rhythmic accompaniment with a *p* dynamic. The Trombone staff is mostly silent. The Percussion staff features a 'Large Cymbal' with a *mp* dynamic. The Piano staff (bottom) has a complex accompaniment with a *mf* dynamic.

Cl

Guitar

Timp.

Perc.

Piano

f

This system continues the musical score with five staves. The Clarinet staff (top) has a melodic line. The Guitar staff has a rhythmic accompaniment with a *f* dynamic. The Timpani staff shows a melodic line with a *f* dynamic. The Percussion staff is mostly silent. The Piano staff (bottom) has a complex accompaniment.

This unforgettably passionate yet serene ending is of an exceptional beauty and breadth of horizons. The conclusion of *Leo*, zodiac sign of Gerhard's wife, is the same as that of *Libra*, with slight variants of instrumentation and dynamics. David Drew has pointed out correctly the essential difference of role this sequence plays in each of these two works:

In *Libra* the ending is foreheard from the start. As the decisive element in an almost miraculous equilibrium...it is something towards which the whole work progresses. But in *Leo*, the form is already complete in most essentials, and the closing music seems to approach it from the outside, as if to meet and conclude it on a purely imaginative level. The effect is daring, mysterious, and intensely moving. It does not proclaim its inner logic, and yet there can be no doubt about its integral function. *Leo* is in one sense married to *Libra*, but can be understood without reference to its partner. Each work lives its own life while rejoicing in the existence of the other.'

In referring to the final sequence of *Libra* and *Leo*, I indicated that it had no antecedents in European music, for some commentators have pointed out that the conception of both endings is related to that of certain primitive oriental music. It is true that the texture here reminds one slightly of the music that accompanies Japanese Noh-drama; and also true is the interest and receptivity Gerhard demonstrated towards the primitive music of all countries, especially his own. But it is evident that the sequence in question is above all typical of his own personality. I myself am inclined rather to relate the piccolo melody to those we heard together in Ibiza in 1966: they were played on the *xeremia* (hornpipe), an indigenous instrument of the island, and Gerhard bought one for himself.

Gerhard once wrote to me:

The final enigma of the essence—what gives art its quality—will always escape through the thickest nets, filters and microfilters of the most scrupulous analytical scrutiny. However, there is a shining side above the dark side of the enigma, and that is, what the composer hears and ultimately understands (and only after the technique with which things have been ordered has been forgotten) is precisely the first thing that captivates the listener immediately and with no help of any kind. Experience has proved this to me on many occasions.

I hope the reader will not hesitate to submit to the experience of Gerhard's music: and I wish with all my heart that this book will encourage people to get to know and appreciate the musical work of this great composer which was the transcendental and everlasting fruit of his existence.

Note

1. David Drew, 'Roberto Gerhard' in *The Listener* 83 (15 January, 1970), p. 94.

Appendix 1

Robert Gerhard: Letter to Schoenberg¹

Vails, 21 October, 1923

Most revered Master!

I really do not know where I can find the courage, in my spiritual depression, to turn to you, if not from the belief of finding advice, in your artistry and deep humanity, which will bring me greater self-enlightenment than any further despair might achieve. I have hesitated for a long time, tormented by doubt, before taking this step: I received the final encouragement in a kind letter from Mr Paul Stefan.² Even so, it is not the same request as I addressed to him that I should now like to repeat to you. I would not be telling the whole truth, however, if I concealed the fact that it has been my most heartfelt wish to be allowed to become your pupil. Confessing that to you is boldness enough; genuine modesty and an implacable, unwavering conscience, not susceptible to temptation, will excuse it in me. But I can no longer bring myself to ask you that today; I find it ever more than presumptuous to turn, without being intellectually or technically prepared, to a great artist with a request for instruction. What I should like to dare now is simply to send you some of my music and to tell you the essential circumstances of my intellectual and moral crisis. Then I should like to ask you to give me the great benefit of your advice; I do not say primarily your judgement of my music: I have long condemned it myself, indeed, it would hardly be necessary to add how it torments and shames me! But to hear a word from you, in my chaotic state of mind, which would help me to find a solution, that is what I should like to hope for. And then to know whether I can find in Vienna the sure hand of a master, and the artistic and human community which will meet my true needs, and for which I have a burning desire.

What I think I must tell you about myself is as follows:

The determination to acquire a thorough musical education, to revise the whole of my earlier, careless musical output, and to gain a firm, thought-out basis for my further development led me, two years ago, to decide to flee the city and my circle of friends, and to shut myself up here in the country (where

I was born) in hermetic isolation. My inner uneasiness had begun soon after the end of the war. The thought of finding discipline in Paris or Germany had long engaged me; but finally my self-confidence won out: I would help myself! The extreme inadequacy, the fractured nature of my musical education have already long tormented me, since forever! My spontaneous, completely unreflective approach to composition irked my conscience: I no longer saw any difference between that and naive dilettantism. Composing at the piano and, from a formal standpoint, improvising, seemed basically immoral to me. I had not learnt to think harmonically. I had not studied form at all: for me it always became rhapsodic. I wanted to muster all my powers against these two failings, with particular emphasis on the first. My programme was much more detailed, but this was its general direction.

I was 24 years old; behind me were eight years in which I should have enjoyed a normal musical education, if only the war had not thrown all my plans out of the window. Instead of that, however, my studies had been as follows: at 16 I began my first, and I can subsequently say my only education in Lausanne with a German musician, Hugo Strauss. In the six months which I spent in that town, I worked through E.F. Richter's book on harmony.³ I lived for a long time then in the belief that the harmony book need almost concern me no longer. A year later I was able to persuade my parents to let me dedicate myself entirely to music. In the meantime, I had composed a great deal, and on my own initiative, dabbled in counterpoint: I went to Munich four months before the outbreak of war. At the Academy I studied piano with Roesger,⁴ attended a few choral classes and took private lessons until the summer with Courvoisier' in counterpoint. I naturally maintained everywhere that I had completely mastered harmony; that was never tested! In September 1914, I had to return to Spain. I awaited the imminent end of the war. In 1916 I went to Barcelona and became a pupil of Pedrell—his last pupil. Rather an object of hostility, the old master lived among us abandoned and forgotten. He developed a cordial affection for me; I became his 'Benjamin', giving him comfort when he was disappointed. I got no education from him; I had only to compose in a fresh way and without deliberation, and it was always to his great satisfaction. His unrestricted praise led me to acquire a certain fame within our circle: my vanity and total lack of mental discipline led me to consider my studies to be complete.

I loved and honoured Pedrell enormously; it caused me great pain to have to leave him a year before his death; in spite of everything I have him to thank for almost all of the best in me; he revealed to me the wonderful neglected

treasure of our true folk music, but he could give me no technique or discipline. He, too, albeit with genius, was an amateur, a great amateur.⁶

Drawn back to my country home, I decided to give up composition temporarily—and to plug the gaps in my education with iron diligence. I started off, according to my own rather extravagant plan, working unaided. My mental state during this time may have closely resembled that of Schumann while he was pursuing intensive finger-exercises. I wanted to recover lost ground at full speed and power, only gradually realising how much time had disappeared—how often I discovered the Mediterranean! [*i.e.* re-invented the wheel]—and that I actually only really learned from making errors. And then, which perhaps upset and hindered me most: the ever sharper, more painful understanding of my endless ignorance and the unrestrained urge to catch up on everything all at once; the dissipation of my few powers on an ever expanding front. Most eagerly, modulation exercises with your *Harmonielehre*, but also trying other methods and possibilities: counterpoint and invention with Bach and Ernst Kurth;⁷ Beethoven quartets; *Tristan*, *Pierrot Lunaire*, *Sacre du Printemps*: everything in direct juxtaposition, and then, on top of this, musical history [*tomischleich*⁸], philosophy of acoustics and all kinds of literature!

It is not so very much this continual striving and retracing of steps, this assembling and dismantling of the elements of technique which torments and discourages me, but much more an increasingly deeply-felt dislike of the individualist-anarchic spirit of this whole way of working, and the disunity of what should be so unified, the complete lack of tradition in such an autodidactic education. The need for a regulated, normal acquisition of technique and general mental discipline has become ever more urgent in me.

The whole of my life and work, set apart from all company and connection with time and people, seem to me to be ever more opposed and hostile to my innermost needs. My complete solitude, in which I have always been so happy until now, is starting to oppress me and appears disastrous. One half of myself has been led astray by the other, trusting in it blindly.

Something in me of a purely musicianly naive, emotional nature is now becoming mistrustful of the promised guidance, order, certain planning and dispassionate self-criticism; intellectual eagerness is now scattered and evaporated. Mental balance has been broken. I am trying to save myself from anarchy. For some time, I thought of going to Paris. The city attracts me very much, but the impressionist, decorative technique which I could learn with Koechlin is no longer what would fully satisfy me. I can no longer be tempted to try and discover my identity *sous l'influence conjugée de Stravinsky et de*

Ravel [under the joint influence of Stravinsky and Ravel]. That will perhaps surprise you with regard to my Trio, a work which was written during the most shallow period of my life. Or, on the contrary, you may understand it straightaway from that piece. I know extremely little of the most recent German music and of the 'Moderns'. I could not say, therefore, why I still feel so particularly drawn by the German manner. Perhaps I am getting all my terms confused. I am frightened, in Paris, of being carried away with a superficial, empirical technique, and without having addressed my fundamental inadequacies, although this new land attracts me very much. Instead of this, however, I should like innermost composure, well-planned preparation, intellectual foundations, mental mastery of my means, i.e. to receive classical discipline and the deepest meditation upon and understanding of the Classics at the hands of the purest traditional source. I believe I would find in Vienna, near to you, within your circle, perhaps the most suitable conditions for the fulfilment of my wishes. I do not need to tell you expressly how an answer from you would affect me: even if it were a negative, disappointing answer, it would surely provide me with clarity about myself and my directions.

But my heartfelt trust, my immodesty perhaps, allows me to hope for a positive answer. In my solitude, I have, through passionate dialogue with your book, found your personality to be so lively and uplifting, that only under this confidence-inspiring impression could my timid, reserved nature dare to tell you so much of my trifles and my needs. The German language causes me much difficulty, I still have to translate too much, so as to find the true expression for my thoughts and feelings. I must sincerely ask for your forgiveness, however, for having put you to the trouble of reading these impetuous outpourings of my heart, and express my endless gratitude to you for it, along with heartfelt, fervent respect and admiration.⁹

Your most devoted

Robert Gerhard

Notes

1. First published in a Catalan translation by Miquel Taverna Homs (grandson of Joaquim Homs), prepared in collaboration with Elsa Capella Hempel, in *Centenari Robert Gerhard* (Generalitat de Catalunya: Departament de Cultura, Barcelona, September 1996), pp. 23-26. The original is in the Gerhard archive at CUL.

2. Paul Stefan (1879-1943) was born in Brno, but lived in Vienna from 1904. He studied music theory with Schoenberg and subsequently became a freelance writer on music. He was a champion of new music and a founder-member (in 1922) of the International Society for Contemporary Music. In 1938, he emigrated to the USA, continuing there his work as a writer and biographer.

3. E.F. Richter, *Lehrbuch der Harmonik* (Leipzig 1853, 36th impression, 1953; English translation, 1864).

4. Karl Roesger was born in Leipzig in 1868 and studied piano and composition at the Music Conservatory there, graduating in 1889. He studied further in Munich with Hans Bussmeyer and Melchior Sachs, continuing with private tuition in Vienna (1893-94). He spent a year in Italy as a concert pianist and music-teacher, forming a quintet that performed widely around the country. He taught piano at the Munich Academy from 1904 onwards, becoming a Professor in 1925; he died in 1929.

5. Walter Courvoisier (1875-1931) taught at the Munich Academy from 1910 onwards; in 1919 he became Professor of Composition.

6. See GOM, pp. 39-40.

7. Ernst Kurth (1886-1946), a Swiss musicologist and teacher of Austrian birth, wrote a number of important books, including *Grundlagen des linearen Kontrapunkts* (Berne, 1917) and *Romantische Harmonie* (1920).

8. This word in the original seems to be a product of Gerhard's imperfect German.

9. Schoenberg replied on 4 November, 1923: 'At present I have no time to look into your compositions more closely. But a fleeting glance and your letter give me a very good impression. Frankly, the final decision whether I take someone as a pupil usually depends on the personal impression I get of him, and that is why I prefer to see people first. Can you manage to come to Vienna? I think I am certain to accept; and I also think I shall be able to help you a bit, since I understand your depression...' (Letter 76 in *Arnold Schoenberg Letters*, selected and edited by Erwin Stein, trans. Eithne Wilkins and Ernst Kaiser, London, 1964).

Appendix 2

Robert Gerhard: Notes and Sketches

i Barcelona 1931-32: Schoenberg, Webern and Casals'

Schoenberg in Vienna or Berlin, and Schoenberg in Barcelona—they did not seem the same person. Neither the different climate, nor the scenery were enough to explain a change so sharp that it could seem like a change of character. In fact, there was no real change. He was simply showing a different side. One side, left behind in darkness, belonged to the Central European environment in which he lived. There, among partisans and detractors, he was obliged to live on a pedestal, so to speak, and with a protective fence around him to keep away friends and enemies alike.

In Barcelona, however, Schoenberg's name was not well known, other than to a few musicians. None of our personal friends, with whom he came into contact immediately, ever gave the slightest indication of feeling shy in his presence. They all treated him with such naturalness that, if it was *too* something, it was probably too familiar. At the start, this caused me some moments of anxiety, given that I could recall the distant and cold respect to which he was accustomed in his own country. But if his reaction surprised me so much, it was because I had in fact seen him come down from a pedestal and start to walk on the same level as other mortals, doing so with a look of happiness on his face.

Later on, he would never tire of repeating that his stay in Barcelona had been one of the happiest periods of his life. The reason for this feeling seems obvious to me. The fact of being treated as a human person and not as a historical personage humanised him. Besides, he had understood perfectly that the attentive but informal spontaneity of the Catalans was purely due to the sympathy his person inspired and that—maybe for the first time in his life—his 'celebrity' and international fame were of little account. I find it amusing that this must have been for him a pleasant discovery—rather like that of an already ageing, rich heiress, who suddenly sees herself courted, not for her dowry, but unequivocally for her personal charms.

During Schoenberg's stay in Barcelona (1931-32), Webern came to conduct two concerts, one of them including his *Passacaglia*, op. 1.

I remember that, drawing my attention to the exceptional richness of the orchestration, he used the term *urrassen*, which does not appear in any German dictionary, nor would it be understood by any German from the Reich, because it is one of the many Austrian expressions that have no validity beyond the border. The sense of this word is a kind of superlative of 'prodigality', in everyday language, being lavish with resources, showing no restraint, pushing the boat out, or similar expressions.

What attracted my attention most was the *tone*, more than the meaning of the word. And, remembering that impression, years later, it seemed to me that what it expressed was, somehow, the echo of an almost traumatic experience which Webern must have had when, one fine day, youthful excess had an unexpected impact, the effect of a collision in the conscience of the now more mature artist.

I think that lightning moment of revelation had a decisive importance in the evolution of Webern: and that the quintessential quality of his music, its aphoristic brevity and, above all, its extreme economy of means, are characteristics which could have come from that crucial collision.

As his style was being stripped, it seems as if, in every new work, Webern asked himself: 'What further can I renounce?', 'What is there that's inessential in my music?', 'What else can I sacrifice and benefit from?'. Webern was too much an artist to have exaggerated this process of stripping.

There comes a moment in which the ellipsis starts to cause a certain degree of ambiguity to filter through and ends up creating obscurity. From here to the typical telegraphic style that repeats 'STOP'—I mean, repeats—'stop' this or that 'key' word of the text 'stop' in order to secure, through this device, the intelligibility of communication.

It is a trivial example, if you will, but it meets the case perfectly in order to illustrate to a point how the inessential is shown to be superfluous, redundant: tokens of clarity of style.

Maestro Casals, in one of the conversations we used to have when we were brought together by occasional meetings of the Consell de la Música—Msgr Anglès and Jordi Rubió could confirm—declared one day that Schoenberg's Cello Concerto took the technique of the instrument a step forward, comparable

to that which Beethoven achieved for violin technique with his Violin Concerto. It is one of the most intelligent observations I have ever heard him make regarding contemporary music.

It is curious that in Alavedra's extensive biography,² Casals mentions the Concerto in passing, but he does not reproduce the opinion he had when he talked about it to us. In my view, so high a valuation involves, on the part of the artist that holds it, a serious obligation towards the work in question. But, in fact, Casals never played Schoenberg's Cello Concerto.

The truth is that I find Schoenberg's position as indefensible as that of Casals. Schoenberg did not have the courage to offer him a work that was one-hundred per cent original. In fact, the Concerto is a transcription-cum-paraphrase (*in freier Umgestaltung*, the manuscript says) of the work of the eighteenth-century Viennese, Georg Mathias Monn. Schoenberg's excuse was that Casals would have never accepted a single bar of original music from him. But in this case, why dedicate the work to him? In fact, the score carries the inscription, one must say undeserved, *Pablo Casals rewidmet*. I have never understood what kind of interest a man like Schoenberg could have in offering a soloist a piece of 'transcendental virtuosity' if it had to be with the concession that the musical language was lifted from a third-class composer of the eighteenth century.³

ii Gerhard in Paris

We have left the Serts and the Mirós at Saint Sulpice, and we have come to live with Pétro (Theo Van Doesburg's widow) at rue Charles Introit 41, Meudon-Valfleury.

We hit it off from the start. Pétro (Nelly in the Dadaist photos of the Cabaret Voltaire period) has the studio and the whole of the lower storey; we occupy the rest of the house. By putting up partitions, I can easily seclude myself in a studio that is completely cut off from everything else.

The orchestration of *Soirees de Barcelone* is very advanced: the sketch for it I finished in Maurice Eisenberg's studio during our stay in the Madame Récamier *pension*.

I have fallen in love with the beech forests that surround Meudon; I go there every day, early in the morning, and I like getting lost there while I think about the latest section of music to be tackled at my next work session.

Rodin's studio (now a museum) is five minutes away from home, and the route is full of memories of Rilke.⁴

In Meudon itself there is an important colony of White Russians. In the market, people speak Russian more than French. In the stalls and shops, the majority of the vendors are Russian. All the women wear scarves on their heads. But when the client is someone important, the vendor's tone and attitude reveal this immediately. The [customer's] companion, who wears a cap and carries the basket for her, sometimes looks exactly like one of those legendary admirals, generals or members of the Duma, who now are said to work as cab-drivers.

Hans Arp, who lives on the same street, further up, comes very often to visit Pétro. Today he read Dada poems in French and German to us. They are always witty, and some of them have made a great impression on me.

Arp likes to theorise. 'Strictly speaking,' he says, 'the fact of simply introducing a modification in a set of objective data, of changing some relationship among them, is itself an act of creation. The Chinese, for instance, used to send artists to remote provinces to look for an object that had no interest at all, a common stone, let's say. They considered that the fact of moving it from one place to another constituted an artistic act, an intervention in the natural relations, a *creative* modification.'

He is amused by the idea—as I say to him—that his definition of 'creative modification' would probably be accepted by a jury as a valid argument against a charge of musical plagiarism.

Hans Arp: I admire his 'results', but I am not quite convinced by his aesthetics. Whether an adequate, or approximate enough, translation of the artist's intentions is realised in the spectator's imagination or not, he is unconcerned. He says, for instance, 'I do not mind the placing of my art-works in any light or context. I would not mind placing them under the table, if that's what you'd prefer.' For me, this is already a step towards solipsism; I have always believed, and continue believing, that communication is a condition *sine qua non*.

In Pétro's library I have discovered a few dadaist books. Worth remembering is the name of Hugo Ball. Hans Arp corroborates this view. Talking about the period of the Cabaret Voltaire, he relates the following anecdote.

It seems that Augusto Giacometti (the sculptor's uncle) was an exceptionally large and opulent figure, with an aquiline profile, florid beard and ample stomach. After supper he enjoyed going for a walk up and down the Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich. Passing a luxury restaurant, one day, he decided to go in. Immediately realising the large number and high status of the clientele and, finding it suitable for his purpose, he shouted in a stentorian voice: LONG LIVE DADA!

Those present sat open-mouthed. The waiters, immediately mobilised, were converging from all points of the room on the intruder who was already making his way peacefully towards the door. But, before reaching it, he suddenly turned and faced the *maitres* and waiters, keeping them at bay with a look that lasted only seconds, but was enough to ensure a 'Giacometti success' of maximum histrionic dignity.

Apparently, he continued walking up and down Bahnhofstrasse and, on discovering other establishments that met his requirements, he repeated the same act a couple of times more.

Later on, when recounting this, Arp said that he had enjoyed himself that evening more than in any of the performances of the Cabaret Voltaire.

Pétro states that during a lecture by Theo van Doesburg about Kurt Schwitters, someone in the audience kept interrupting him from time to time with violent barking noises. At first, the distinguished audience reacted by staring furiously in the direction of the guilty person. But when the man started barking like a great St. Bernard, a gentleman of athletic physique grabbed him by the collar and started dragging him towards the door, amidst general uproar.

Poor Van Doesburg, desperately gesticulating, managed eventually to make his voice heard above the hubbub. He shouted: 'Ladies and gentlemen, let me introduce you to Herr Kurt Schwitters...'—just as they were about to throw him down the stairs. The audience—every bit as respectful and respectable as ever—started clapping him. What other choice did they have? They could either show that they found the incident extremely amusing or that they lacked a basic sense of humour.⁵

Hanns Eisler phoned yesterday, and we arranged to meet at the Café de la Paix. I found it natural that he preferred a luxury establishment to a dark bistro—it is the correct communist strategy, I thought.

In the evening, Poldi 'dressed up' and we had a minor row: I thought she had made herself look a bit too elegant for the occasion. She changed herself and we went out dressed, I will not say like proletarians, but like very modest petty bourgeois.

Once we arrived at the Café de la Paix, we had some difficulty in finding Hanns and his woman companion, because they perfectly matched the *entourage*: she was wearing an otter-fur coat, and he a silk shirt and tie from the Faubourg St. Honoré. Poldi gave me one of the most eloquent looks in her repertoire. Evidently, we were the only couple that attracted attention.

She still laughs about it today; she says: 'If the secret police had had orders to keep an eye on a suspicious couple, you can bet your life you and I would have been in big trouble!'

28th April—Hitler's speech on the wireless. Three hours of strident sounds, table-thumps that made the wireless-set shudder, harsh, harsh...! Impossible to foresee what he'll do tomorrow. It is a classical example of words as camouflage for thought. We laymen had the idea that diplomacy, in one of its aspects, was the art of dealing with the most knotty questions with inexhaustible resources of verbal twists and refinements. The eruption of backyard oratory from the mouth of a head of state must constitute a sensational innovation in the field of diplomacy. A little bit more cynicism and H[itler] could make Picabia's phrase his own: *Je ne donne ma parole d'honneur que pour mentir.*

We were coming out together from the Mme. Récamier *pension* and going around St. Sulpice, when Miró saw, on the opposite pavement, that bottle wrapped in newspapers which appears in a famous painting of his.⁶

Everybody has heard of the *objet trouvé*. 'But we are maybe a few,' so I told him, 'who have been present in the act of "finding" the *objet trouvé*.' He answered with an enigmatic grin, but made no comment.

What I found most curious was the decisiveness—at the very moment when he saw the bottle—which made hm go and pick it up, like a reflex action: and

even more the fact that, apparently, *the finding* presented a complete absence of surprise, as if the bottle and he, or he and the bottle, had arranged to meet previously and that, therefore, it was the most natural thing in the world that they met at the agreed place and time.

Letters from Cambridge (Professors Dent and Trend) tell me that it is possible that King's College might offer me a kind of special stipend (research grant), the award of which would be linked to a sole condition—that of living in Cambridge, simply, with no other obligation to the College or the University. It seems like a fairy tale.⁷

Coming from an academic community, what pleases me particularly is the compliment implied in the equation: composer of 'modern' music = scientific research, which I take with a pinch of salt, I need hardly say. Although, by rights, we probably have more in common than might seem the case at first. For example, in the first place, the temperament of explorers.

The invitation from King's College has arrived. It makes me think: in Germany, with the creation of what they call *Ordensburgen** are they probably trying to copy the English college system?

The famous question of the 'cadres' [regimental leadership]—how to form 'cadres'. In so-called liberal countries one can still talk, up to a point, of a principle of natural selection, despite the unsatisfactory practicalities and probably important influence of social and economic differences. The selection of 'cadres' by diktat, seems to be an extremely ill-omened institution for the regime that sets it up.

The directive function of leadership is surely one that has inexorably become perverted without freedom, without the free play of competence, of struggle, of the character that only struggle can give. The 'breeding' of 'cadres' under conditions of decreed privilege cannot lead to anything other than the creation of a fundamentally arrogant and feeble mandarinat. This type of organisation also has many pitfalls. Spoiled bodies, depraved bodies.

But if not that of the principle of authority, what other solution is there to the problem of creating 'cadres' when—in certain countries—the principle of natural selection works the other way round in the political context: i.e. given a temperament that generally prefers independence to power itself and which,

consequently, makes the best ones retreat and relinquishes political ambition to those who are second-rate?

iii Gerhard in England

The Russian Ballet have arrived in Covent Garden. Antal Dorati arranged for me to have a meeting with the new director of the company and with Serge Grigorieff. I played *Soirees de Barcelone* for them on the piano. They are interested in the work, but there is a very important obstacle. The contract I have signed carries the signature of Colonel de Basil. And the company are at present in dispute with him. Obviously, they do not want to complicate the situation by putting on a ballet which, by right, belongs to Basil. They would offer me a contract provided that I could find a way of cancelling the one with him.

For a fortnight I have been sending telegrams to all his possible addresses in Paris and Monte Carlo which I am given one after another. Even R[eply] P[aid] telegrams elicit no response.

The curtain seems to be coming down on my hopes of seeing the ballet put on soon. At the same time, everything indicates that the curtain is just about to rise on the world stage for a 'performance' of a completely different magnitude.

Talking to Stravinsky, one day last year, I told him that not long ago we had been visited in Cambridge by an instrumental group from Peking which performed a programme of contemporary Chinese music. My interest was aroused by the mixture of Chinese and European instruments, and by the mixture of pentatonic and diatonic styles in the compositions, but above all by the exclusivity of the two-beat bar, as if the three-beat bar virtually did not exist for the Chinese.

Regarding the interest level of the programme, I was indiscreet enough to say: 'Overall it was very monotonous, they all seemed like pieces by Khachaturian.'

Quick as a flash, Stravinsky replied: 'I understand. You mean like Albéniz or Granados!'

W[illiam]G[lock], our host on that occasion, saved the situation by tagging on the name of Villa-Lobos, whom he knew to be one of Stravinsky's *betes noires*. They both burst out laughing and the incident was closed.

A few weeks ago, recalling the incident with Glock, I commented: 'Is it not strange that Stravinsky—given that he is a White Russian—felt offended by a disrespectful observation made about a Soviet composer who is not even Russian, but Armenian? Is it possible that—maybe subconsciously—Stravinsky's nationalism, or, let us say, maybe only his exile's patriotism, has been expanding along with the territorial expansion of the USSR?'

Obviously, it is a question that only Stravinsky himself could clarify, and it is of no importance. Anyway, I want to add as a postscript how I would have thrown in Villa-Lobos for free, if we had been trading composers; but I would not have given a single Albéniz or a single Granados in exchange for two or three Khachaturians! And let it be understood that in this case I am not moved by any patriotism or nationalism, feelings of which I confess myself innocent.

iv Reflections on Art

Art is political, religious, etc. in an ancient phase, when the individual has not yet been differentiated from the group, from the tribe, etc. Tradition, history, customs, laws, magic—everything is social.

Art (a modern concept) is an agent of gradual and incessant modification of human sensitivity; an extension of sensitivity to previously unknown, unexplored spheres; also an extension to spheres of experience previously deliberately ignored for having been considered, incorrectly, as artistically insignificant or negligible.

There is no artist who is able or prepared to give a definition of beauty. That is why he tries to create it. However, the others (e.g. the critics), the ones who are sure of knowing the definition, have lost the slightest desire to create beauty, probably because they see too clearly what it all is about. A knowledge that is true or held to be so, seems to promise ultimate satisfaction—or one that tends to be so.

Just as there are different modalities of knowledge, there surely must be different modalities of ignorance. There is, for example, a creative ignorance, or a type that is favourable to creativity; an ignorance which is father of the desire, mother of the idea.

What, in this complex state of affairs, gives a more terrible idea of the Divinity, is the fact that omniscience should not have paralysed creation—

metaphorically speaking. Man is incapable of understanding why this is so. I cannot understand, for instance, that a mortal who knew in advance how a work still in the making was to turn out, in great detail, in the most intricate folds and creases of its constitution, could really be capable of executing it, of bringing it into *real* being.

Those who spread the ridiculous notion that Mozart had a 'finished' symphony *in petto* [in his mind], before putting pen to paper, and that all he had to do was, simply, to 'copy it down', do not know what they are talking about.

Symmetry: my *bete noire*. I would never choose the spider for an allegory of the creative imagination. Instead, I would choose the ant, an enormous expenditure of activity wasted in comings and goings, twists and turns that lead nowhere. Or even better, the bee (from the comparison with which those who think that artistic creation is child's play would see how very wrong they are); the bee, who goes on and on flying head first against the half-open window. When, at last, he manages to discover the opening and escapes..., the surprise must be simply inexpressible. This is exactly the reaction of the artist at the sudden moment when he finds the solution for one of those complicated problems in which the imagination sometimes has him entangled.

Memory (*Mneme*), they say, was the mother of the Muses. Undoubtedly. But, perforce, it must have been very bad memory, it must have only remembered by halves. Because it seems that too complete a memory, more than a stimulus, is a drawback for the Muse. I speak as a musician, obviously. The writer might not agree. The fantastic thing in the case of Joyce, for example, is that he could become such a great artist with that notary's or ragman's memory he had. He says he never threw anything away. He collected everything and it is probable that, at some point or other, everything would have been useful for him.

When Joyce was already nearly blind, he used to dictate parts of his *Finnegan's Wake* to Samuel Beckett. One day, during dictation, there was a knock at the door; Beckett did not hear it, but Joyce answered: 'Come in.' Later on, when

Beckett was reading aloud the dictated fragment, Joyce interrupted him, saying: 'What is this "Come in"?' Beckett answered: 'It is what you have dictated'. Joyce, after a moment of reflection, said: 'It is all right; let it be.'⁹

Exactly! It has happened to me more than once, in music, and I have always reacted in the same way as Joyce did, for instance, in the third movement of the Harpsichord Concerto. With the difference that, in my case, it was not a question of 'letting be' the adventitious phrase that had smuggled itself in, but the necessity of 'integrating it' serially, in order to 'be able to be!'

Norbert Wiener, the founder of cybernetics, speaks in his [auto] biography about a curious morbid state, during an attack of bronco-pneumonia, in which he says his temperature and difficulty in breathing made it impossible for him to distinguish between the movement of the curtain before the half-open window, and a dark point, still not resolved, in the study of potentials he was working on at that time.

He adds, 'I cannot say merely that the pain revealed itself as a mathematical tension, or that the mathematical symbolised itself as a pain: for the two were united too closely to make such a separation significant. However, when I reflected on this matter later, I became aware of the possibility that almost any experience may act as a temporary symbol for a mathematical situation which has not yet been organised and cleared up.'¹⁰

A similar phenomenon is quite familiar to me. In my case I would describe it as a formalism that works *in vacuo*, although correctly, from the musical point of view; but the matter upon which it works is 'nothing', or it can be anything, and it can continuously pass from one state to another, from the movement of the curtain in the air of the night to a completely different thing with no link to the previous one. A morbid condition is unnecessary, in my case: a sleepless night is sufficient or even a disturbed sleep.

Another observation by Wiener which helps clarify the relationship between music and mathematics rather better than the majority of common comparisons: 'If there is one quality which marks the competent mathematician more than any other, I think it is the power to operate with temporary emotional symbols and organise out of them a semi-permanent, recallable language. If one is not able to do this, one is likely to find that his ideas

evaporate from the sheer difficulty of preserving them in an as yet *unformulated* shape."

Standing before the electronic colossus, the synthesiser of Columbia University, Milton Babbitt gives me the impression of a David without a sling. It is useless to challenge the giant with the weapons of dodecatonic serialism with which it is confronted. In my opinion, B[abbitt] has not understood the nature of the new medium. Apart from a few more or less ornamental 'effects', the electronic music he has produced up to now with this synthesiser could have perfectly well been obtained by playing a cinema organ (a Hammond organ, for example) with four hands, the same number of feet, and the help of the infinite number of registers with which the electronic organ industry is today supplied.

B[abbitt] forgets that, in a period in which the speed of motion has exceeded the sound-barrier, it was written that sound was destined to go beyond the barrier of the well-tempered scale (*pitch-barrier*).

Up to now, all the musical cultures we know of have been based upon traditional types of scales of determinate structure. Essentially, the scale is a catalogue: the systematic ordering of all the notes which the musician or composer has at his disposal. The frequency of each note is fixed in c[ycles] p[er] s[econd]. When we say that our Western system is 'tempered', we mean that frequencies must have been fixed artificially, I mean rationally and not arbitrarily; that is, our intervallic system, except the interval of octave, is artificial, in the sense of 'fixed' or 'well-tempered', which means the same, and not 'natural'! The only totally inadmissible defence of the well-tempered system—and it is the one its devotees use most often—is a qualifying one: that of being 'natural', in the sense of being based upon 'natural laws'—inadmissible, however, because it is simply not true.

When I say that sound was destined to surpass, and has, in fact, surpassed the barrier of the well-tempered scale, I mean that the exclusive use of notes belonging to this scale cannot nowadays be justified any more: neither in the case of music written for traditional instruments, nor, much less, in the case of electronic music.

Sounds of indeterminate, but constant frequencies, those of unstable frequencies, complex sounds (more or less dense conglomerations of a great variety of diverse simultaneous frequencies) and many other sonic phenomena of a similar nature, have already been accepted in the music of our time and their use is undoubtedly legitimate, whenever the credentials they present are artistic and not merely experimental or theoretical.

Electronic music is the native territory of the sonic phenomena just mentioned. In this sphere, the presence of notes belonging to our well-tempered scale represents, conversely, an intrusion. This does not mean it is illegitimate. *Collage*, which is an important contemporary technique, is deliberately based upon the principle of intrusion. But when, in an electronic composition, the intruders predominate decisively over the native population (as in the case of M[ilton] B[abbitt]), it is a very different matter. The situation could be aptly compared to that of a territory still occupied by a colonial power, still not free and, therefore, still not able to start *to fare da se*—that is, to be developed according to its intrinsic possibilities.

Let my criticism of B[abbitt] not be interpreted in the wrong way, I personally hold him in the highest esteem. He is very intelligent and as an exponent he displays an extraordinary fluency and clarity. It is true he has forged a technique and idiom that are idiosyncratic and sometimes hermetic. To introduce neologisms liberally without taking the trouble to elucidate that which is still not current accepted language, indifferent, it seems, to whether we understand it or not, seems to me like a discourtesy towards the reader. But when poring over a particularly hard page, I have racked my brains trying to understand it and, at last, I find it simply means 'How much is a dozen eggs in the market today?', but expressed in Sanskrit or in Linear B, the thing seems to me frankly perverse.

For me, the supreme inelegance in a writer is obscurity. Regrettable if he is obscure from laziness, unforgivable if from arrogance.

I think that the group of North-American composers who have adopted so-called aleatory or indeterminate methods of composition have been inspired by the procedures of the 'abstract expressionist' painters. It is another case of music prompted by ideas of extra-musical origin. The difference between this and the 'programmatic' music of half a century ago is that the 'programme', then, was pictorial or narrative; nowadays the programme, or the programme's content, is essentially 'method'. Maybe it is the price we musicians have to pay for having been born in the middle of a scientific era. (A.N. Whitehead has said that 'the greatest invention of the nineteenth century was the invention of the method of invention.').¹² In the sense and to the extent that the concept of 'method' determines the content of its 'programme', aleatory music is, undoubtedly, abstract music. I leave aside the 'expressionist' aspect which I think is the least interesting for the composers of this group.

It must be affirmed that anything which helps music become emancipated from not only the literary but also specifically linguistic tutelage to which it has been subjected down the centuries, is an advance worthy of our congratulations.

Since the Renaissance, according to Marshall McLuhan, we have lived in an essentially literary and visual culture;¹³ nowadays, however, we have entered again an oral-aural world that had been submerged since the Middle Ages. Abstract music simply means, 'music' music, emancipated from cohabitation with the principles of literary language. The pure 'physical' basis of music, that of the intrinsic cine-dynamic, tonic, textural and acoustic-temporal organisation values, is the only genuine base for a syntax of the art of sounds. To stop mid-way, to pass from linguistic models to pictorial ones, is to fall out of the frying-pan into the fire.

Remembering Whitehead's dictum, it is appropriate then to emphasise that the difference between the musician's method and that of the painter, is a difference of 'process'.

In painting, from the point of view of the spectator, the process is the outcome of a logical process [*soristica*], or in the definite past, that is, it is no longer an immediate datum of perception, but, in any case, an analytical datum. (I use the term 'procedure' to denote the *active* application of technique; the term 'process' indicates a 'becoming', on the biological level).

In music, from the point of view of the listener, the process is, so to speak, taking place in the present indicative. That is, in music the process is something theoretically distinguishable but practically inseparable, not only from the 'medium', but also from the very act of communication.

Nevertheless, we must not forget that features which the arts lend each other are always purely metaphorical. Even then, they still present a series of risks. But one may say that a little bit of real talent can, almost always, rectify, quietly and with no fuss, considerable theoretical deviations.

Until very recently I had not been too interested in stereophony. It seemed to me, mainly, something for record-lovers and fans of 'hi-fi'. But the demonstration that R.R. [Raymond Raikes] from the department of Drama of the BBC gave us, has made me change my mind.

The possibility of locating sound in a concrete point of three-dimensional space; of making it come nearer or move away at will; so that it moves across

the auditive field from right to left or viceversa, as an actor crosses the stage; and, above all, the extraordinary effect of the *spread* of sound which, from a central point, one can extend over the entire auditive field: these are all not simply tricks: in my opinion, they constitute a new 'dimension'—not in music, but in radiophonic technique.

The curious fact is that, a few days after the demonstration, Poldi and I were discussing the work we had listened to as if it had been a visual experience, as if we had 'seen' images while, in fact, all we had seen was a green curtain used to hide the couple of loudspeakers needed for the stereophonic effects. That is, the optical illusion had established itself in the memory with so definite a character that, in fact, it might have originated as a concrete visual experience.

Marshall McLuhan has introduced the distinction between 'cool' and 'hot' media. A cool medium is the one which offers maximum information, that is, more than enough, inducing consequently an essentially passive state of receptivity. The hot medium, however, only offers partial, incomplete information and therefore induces the imagination to complete with a creative effort everything that is half-given, or assumed (by the source). The cool medium, therefore, demands a minimal participatory approach, the hot medium a maximum disposition to participate.

Television is a cool medium. Radio is a hot medium. The first one is and will continue to be the most popular of the two. But there is no doubt that the second, aesthetically speaking, is infinitely superior to the first.

Modern translation of *ama et fac quod vis*: think carefully and do as you please...oh, really [*...mats il faut être poète d'abord*].

In a letter to the publisher who had commissioned from him a book of impressions of his first visit to the United States, Dylan Thomas apologised that after more than a year since his return and receipt of a large sum of money as an advance, he had felt completely incapable of writing during all this time... 'nothing, nothing, nothing', he insists pathetically. And he adds: 'Too many lectures, too many poetry recitals, too much oratory... and the more words I was using, the more panic I was getting just from thinking that never again would I use words as a poet.'¹⁴

I have felt with the same intensity the kind of exhaustion which D.T. talks about. On returning from the US, after a term of individual lessons and

composition seminars at Michigan University, I remember having written down this imaginary consultation:

- What hurts me the most is my subconscious.
- What do you mean? What the hell have you done to it?
- I think I have 'verbalised' it too much
- That really is serious!
- What do you advise?
- A year and a day of keeping your lips buttoned.

Notes

1. See also GOM, pp. 103-147 for further extended writings by Gerhard on Schoenberg and Webern.

2. J. Alavedra, *Pau Casals* (Barcelona, 1962; Spanish translation, 1963), p. 74.

3. Schoenberg's Cello Concerto (1932-33) is based on J.G. Monn's Harpsichord Concerto in D (1746). In a notebook in CUL (10.129m f.36-39), Gerhard indulged an even worse opinion of Schoenberg's effort: 'I have now heard the Schoenberg-Monn Cello Concerto. It has been a painful experience. In the first place, I think I understand Monn. No doubt he is not more than a good second-rank composer, but the *original* Monn Cello Concerto and the Harpsichord one (on which Schoenberg based his) share a polished "urbane", or rather "courtly" style, not without distinct individual touches of some charm. Schoenberg's comment that he has taken out boring sequences "by the handful" and substituted them for *the true musical substance* is of a hair-raising pomposity and silliness. He has destroyed the original's stylistic integrity, its simple, but clearly-shaped form, and trodden down every single feature that has charm in Monn's work. The result is a ham-fisted, thematically, tonally and formally erratic and confused farrago. This is not the work of an artist, it's the work of a pedant, a crushing bore. The whole thing is poles apart from Stravinsky's *pastiches*, with his impeccable sense of style—with his *own* identity shining *through* the preserved identity of the *pastiched* composer (Pergolesi—Tchaikovsky, for example). Schoenberg is so clumsy, he doesn't even achieve what one might call a "mock-Schoenberg". '

4. Rilke was commissioned to write a monograph on Rodin in the spring of 1902 and in September he went to Meudon to meet him, thereafter paying daily visits until early in 1902. His book on the sculptor was published in Berlin at the end of March 1903. Two years later Rodin invited him to live at Meudon and act as his secretary. By 1906, however, their working relationship had deteriorated and Rilke was summarily dismissed. But the bond between the young poet and the elderly sculptor had grown quite deep and, the following year, Rodin wrote a conciliatory letter. From 1908, Rilke was, for a while, Rodin's tenant at his Paris work-place, the Hotel Biron (now the Musée Rodin).

5. Cf. Hans Richter, *Dada* (London, 1965), p. 144: Richter adds that Schwitters 'took his place on the platform where he uttered a variety of other noises, as well as barking

and reading more or less naturalistic poems like *Anna Blume* or the splendid *Revolution in Revon'*.

6. *The Wine Bottle* (1924).
7. See Chapter IV, note 2, above.
8. Training schools for Nazi leaders.
9. Paraphrased from Herbert Gorman, *James Joyce* (New York, 1939), pp. 243-244.
10. Norbert Wiener, *I am a Mathematician* (Cambridge, MA & London, 1956), pp. 85-86.
11. *Ibid*, p. 86
12. A.N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (Cambridge, 1927), p. 120.
13. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (London, 1964), ch. 2, pp. 22-32.
14. Dylan Thomas, Letter to Charles Fry (Head of Allen Wingate), 17February, 1953, in *Selected Letters of Dylan Thomas*, ed. Constantine Fitzgibbon (London, 1966).

Reminiscences by Two American Composers

i Jan Bach¹

Roberto Gerhard was at the Berkshire Music Center, Tanglewood, for the whole of the summer of 1961, along with his wife and the other teaching composers, Wolfgang Fortner and Aaron Copland. I had been urged to go there to study with Gerhard by Kenneth Gaburo, then my composition teacher at the University of Illinois. Of the eighteen or so student composers, most were in their early thirties; I believe that I, David Loeb, and one other student were the only ones in our early twenties. We were equally divided among the three composition teachers but, oddly enough, only those of us with Mr Gerhard felt they were getting their money's worth. He was able to impart his knowledge of set theory and serial techniques, yet draw on several methods of composition with which he had grown through the years.

My lessons went basically like this: I would come into his studio and play what I had written on the piano. He would comment on what I had written, with a particular eye and ear for complementary sets. I remember him asking me why one phrase was followed by another with nearly the same pitch-content &c; not the same, but not completely different either. He was always neatly dressed in a suit and tie, his speech was very precise and well-articulated and he smoked constantly; a pipe indoors, cigarettes outdoors—despite a recent heart attack. His wife was always with him, except when he was teaching his private lessons. Although she was a gentle and good-humoured German woman, she seemed constantly to be monitoring his health.

About halfway through the summer, Gerhard decided to have his own weekly seminar with his own students, similar to those of Copland (except that his were more like orchestration sessions with demonstrations by the Fromm players at the camp—Paul Jacobs, piano; Art Bloom, clarinet; Robert Parris, flute; and the Lenox String Quartet). The nature of these seminars was more philosophical than technical, but he did posit several things for us to think about. One such was that the number, as a musical element, should be considered in three different ways: as an integer, as a fraction and as part of a ratio. He showed how much of his music was based on these uses of numbers. Yet he still left room for folk-song in his compositions; I remember him commenting that while

composing his Accordion Concerto [Nonet], which was performed that summer, a little ditty kept going through his mind, and he had a hell of a time deriving it from the row that governed the rest of the piece.

Many of our conversations were technical. We talked about generating rows from sub-sets, deriving combinatorial possibilities using numerical sequences to generate rhythms, intervals, even choices of instruments on particular phrases &c: the same things I had been studying with Kenneth Gaburo during the previous year. My memory is that one had to pry things out of Gerhard: he gave good advice, but you, as the student, had to ask for it. He seemed reluctant to impose his methods of solving problems on his students. I remember him once telling a student that he should be 'squeezing him like an orange' to get everything he had to offer. It was interesting, however, that two of the three of us receiving awards that summer studied with Gerhard—myself and Roger Reynolds (who later won the Pulitzer Prize) shared the Koussevitzky award for chamber music.

Gerhard had a gentle sense of humour and occasionally engaged in word-play and puns which showed his complete command of English. He refused to use anything but an English pronunciation, even when it went against his Spanish/German background: he pronounced his name 'Jerrard' (accent on the second syllable) and I once heard him refer to Don Quixote as 'Don Kwicksaht'. He regaled us with stories about his friendship with Schoenberg and Webern and showed us the famous picture of the three of them walking down a street in Barcelona. He said that Schoenberg orchestrated a large part of *Moses und Aron* in Barcelona. Apparently, Schoenberg loved gossip so much that he would work in the same room where his wife was conversing with Poldi Gerhard and everyone and then would stop writing and ask to hear a juicy bit again. Gerhard also revealed that Schoenberg had difficulty remembering who he liked and disliked, so he kept a small filing drawer in which cards with his acquaintances' names could be placed in the 'Like' or 'Dislike' section, depending on his current attitude towards them. I don't know if this is authentic.

I wanted very much to continue my studies with Gerhard, but the Berlin Wall went up that summer and I was drafted into military service after the next school. It wasn't until the summer of 1968, three years out of the service, that I found myself in Cambridge on a Sunday afternoon, hiking out of town to Madingley Road, where Gerhard's house was situated. I felt some trepidation at arriving unannounced, so I stepped into a telephone box on the outskirts of town and called his number. His wife answered and remarked that she remembered me very well, but that Roberto had just had another of his strokes (the second or third, I believe) and couldn't be disturbed. And then, of course, he died two years later.

ii Roger Reynolds²*Principle and Accommodation: A Tribute to Roberto Gerhard*

My first composition teacher, Ross Lee Finney, had met and come to admire Roberto Gerhard while stationed in England during World War II. Later, as Composer-in-Residence at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, beginning in 1950, he had gathered about him a remarkable group of young composers. The graduate composers at this time numbered perhaps a dozen, and diverse though they were (including figures as different in outlook as George Crumb, Robert Ashley, and myself), they became, as a result of Finney's dynamic style, a kind of informal brotherhood. When he took some leave from his teaching post, in the spring of 1960, Gerhard was invited to replace him. Finney had a keen mentorial sense and was rarely mistaken in his judgments about what would benefit a student. Still, it is difficult to imagine that he could have foreseen the depth of impact that Gerhard's arrival at Ann Arbor in early 1960 would have on everyone close to composition there, students and faculty alike.

The music had preceded our visitor—if I remember correctly, a recording of String Quartet No. 1 (1950-55) played by the Parrenin Quartet. But during our first seminar together, the range of Gerhard's intellect, musicianship and humane dimensions was, one could honestly say, overwhelming. To begin with, in his very precise, articulate voice, he *asked our permission* to speak about his own work. More specifically, he modestly indicated his willingness to discuss the working methods by which he shaped his 'musical discourse'.

During that first exposure, and at the subsequent group or individual tuition sessions in which he spoke about compositional ways, his insights seemed to me, as they still do, the most elevated and telling which I have encountered. He was able to articulate aspects of the creative life that normally remain unsaid, perhaps even unsuspected. And the impact of his thought can be gauged by the fact that I have sometimes found myself, close to four decades later, unknowingly quoting him to a student or colleague with close to literal accuracy. (Such disconcerting parallelisms have come up several times when circumstances led me to look at his marvellous *An Inaugural Lecture?* and other writings.)

So far as I am aware, Gerhard had no sustained, mentorial involvement with any group of young musicians until his Ann Arbor sojourn. Had I known then that he had undergone several serious heart attacks before our days together, much might have been differently understood. I don't believe that anyone in Ann Arbor knew about his perilous health.

The relationship between him and the formidable Leopoldina was touchingly close. She was unfailingly protective of him, and the basis of this caring was easily understood on other grounds than fragile health. We all came quickly to know her as Poldi. One either won her favour or felt the effects of having failed in this regard. Not that she was invariably solicitous towards Roberto—far from it—but moments of bristle about detail never distracted from her deep and unwavering concern for his personal and artistic welfare. Although she evidently had opinions about his music and its worth, I never heard her mount a challenge to his musical observations, however tough she was in other regards. She had bright, all-assessing eyes, and seemed to find much to engage her, from the quotidian to the exploration of larger principles.

Roberto himself was alert and upright, disconcertingly of a simultaneously patrician and self-deprecatory mien. One was allowed to sense his emotional vulnerability at the same time that one could not doubt the presence of a decisive intellect. I remember privately vowing then, and repeating to my wife, Karen, much later, that I would always retain the capacity to be injured—to be betrayed by an unsuspected capacity in other individuals or institutions for unprincipled behavior.

An incident that vividly revealed Gerhard's emotional openness involved a hoax perpetrated at the BBC while he was in the US. Sir William Glock, that legendarily discriminating champion of the new as Controller of BBC music, was, predictably, a staunch supporter of Gerhard's music. And Roberto was also a frequent contributor of insightful short articles for that network's publication, *The Listener*. He had spoken on several occasions to us about his admiration for the BBC's enlightened advocacy of new music. (From a contemporary American perspective, such governmentally-derived support was astonishing and improbable in a period so full of musical experiment as the late '50s and early '60s.)

One day I was startled to meet Roberto, face alarmingly flushed, spluttering with outrage, which Poldi was attempting to calm down, to no avail. It slowly emerged that BBC producer Hans Keller had surreptitiously arranged a live broadcast of a spontaneous group improvisation on percussion, presenting it as though it were a serious example of serially-disciplined composition. That an institution which he held as reliable and principled could involve itself with so potentially damaging a prank was unthinkable: to Gerhard, intolerable. Nothing in the by then many hours I had spent with him had even hinted at the possibility of such an emotional display.⁴

I found myself watching with admiring astonishment. No one else I had encountered would have been capable of such Olympian outrage over what was

evidently an insidious yet minor act of subversion. I do not mean to imply that there was no basis for Gerhard's distress. He was a man of staunch firmness of principle, but—and this will be indicated more fully below—his ability to discern the all-important distinctions between an ideal and its effective manifestation rarely deserted him. It was part of what made him so irresistible. Principle and accommodation were both given rein as circumstances warranted. Reframing one of his remarks, some situations require that a composer 'sacrifices theoretical niceties to practical operational advantages'.⁵

Roberto's vulnerability emerged in other ways as well. The Finney house, in which the Gerhards were living, was perhaps a half-hour walk from the School of Music facilities, and I would often engineer matters so that I might accompany him home at the close of his teaching responsibilities. There was a direct route, but it passed a large cemetery, and I noticed that Roberto found varying, and often rather flimsy, reasons for either circumventing this path altogether, or, at the least, diverting our stroll to the opposite side of the street.

On a less sombre note, I found occasional delight in the interplay between his Spanish roots and the adopted English which he treated with such exquisite consideration: 'difficulty' became 'di fig-ul tee' and even Don Quixote was reshaped as 'dahn kwix oht'. And there were other, more directly playful facets to our interaction. Foremost among his 'sins' (explicitly withheld from Poldi) was a passion for Coca Cola, which he would consume in quart-sized 'jumbo' containers whenever the opportunity presented itself, pulling on his straw with raised-eyebrowed relish.

Gerhard did not speak often about Schoenberg, Berg, or Webern—though when he did it was always with manifest respect. But he did recount being knocked to the ground by Schoenberg's very large and, it would seem, pointedly undisciplined dog when he first arrived in Vienna at the master's door. Already gripped by trepidation, as he admitted, all vestiges of self-assurance must have deserted him as he lay there flat on his back. But the vision the diminutive Schoenberg glimpsed over the shoulders of his reflexive canine guardian was considerably more amusing to the supplicant, recalling it some forty years later, than it could possibly have seemed at the time. Gerhard also told of Schoenberg's necessary triumph in any contest on a tennis court (innocent volleying was not an option). More elaborate were tales such as that of Gerhard's notably arch use of Barcelona's mayor, in full regalia. It was early April, 1936. Webern's meticulous, communication-impaired rehearsal strategies as conductor—and the resulting glacial rate of progress—were imperilling the scheduled premiere of the Berg Violin Concerto. In fact, it had become evident

that the performance could not occur unless it were possible to substitute the more expeditious and communicative skills of Hermann Scherchen. Gerhard explained that he had brought the mayor in as a conveniently incomprehensible figure of authority, an obstacle not to be resisted even by Webern. Thus, while the mayor carried on in magisterial Catalan, Roberto freely 'translated' to Webern the necessary message, transferring authority to Scherchen.⁶

But these and other humanising anecdotes about major Second Viennese School figures were all superseded by the picture Roberto offered of the climate into which Schoenberg introduced the Method of Composing with Twelve Tones Which are Related Only with One Another. It is impossible for you to imagine now, Gerhard told us, how deeply Schoenberg suffered in formulating and then, by example (though not in his teaching), promulgating his new method of composing. Schoenberg had evidently been far less forthcoming with his techniques than was his Catalan pupil, rarely speaking about his new strategy even within his circle of dedicated students.

While Gerhard was surely not disrespectful of tradition, he appeared far less deeply committed to the conservation of conventions of any sort than he was to the fostering of that which might spur fresh and interesting results. He was always on the look out, and anything—certainly including phenomena from outside music—could be and often was converted into what he called 'grist for the mill'. I recall his frequent references to Alfred North Whitehead, to George Santayana, as well as D'Arcy Thomson's massive *Growth and Form*.

In speaking about the serial principle, and especially in examining its applications in, for example, Schoenberg's Suite op. 29, Gerhard stirred in us an excitement, an empathic feel for how the provocations of the tone-row could nurture and guide compositional processes. Since the series is unlikely to give you precisely what intuition might suggest is needed at each juncture, adjustments must be made. The composer must find an acceptable, no, an inspired way to adapt to (even, on occasion, to evade in the manner of Webern's grace-notes) the inconvenient necessity of the 'unacceptable' next pitch that the series provides. Here, invention and accommodation move hand in hand. I see now how seductive his explanations were, how far and how significantly they went beyond the clerkish or, indeed, logistically tangled prescriptions frequently offered up to students as that which is essential to the serial idea. Gerhard led me towards method in a fashion that rendered it valuable, demanding, yet entirely plausible.

In fact, I found it desirable to extrapolate his perspective, and to enlarge it, in my own practice, into something like a decision-making tree. Roberto did

not, to my recollection, ever argue it in such terms, but it has seemed implicit to me in the way that he lived (with which I tried to stay in close contact) as well as in the explicit compositional methodologies to which he was introducing us.

The process, as I extrapolated it, went like this: set up a structure, a matrix of relationships by means of which opportunities of appropriate sorts are arrayed before one. Shape, in effect, a pre-considered world of possibilities within which to exercise intuitive impulse. Make a choice, then another. At first, because there is a substantial selection available, a relatively large number of items from which to choose, each decision—proceeding one way rather than another—is not particularly weighty. But, as the process continues, the options become both less numerous and less attractive. Choosing one thing over another carries long-term consequences in that something selected now will not be available for a later, perhaps more essential purpose. To act in principled ways, then, is to accept that there are consequences to each successive choice and thereby bind oneself to make them with greater foresight and deliberation.

Although Gerhard was surely particular and detailed in his analyses (of his own work, or of Babbitt's *Du*, or Boulez's *Structures*, Book I, for example)—he set the composition seminar the task of writing out and then exploring the re-positioning of all the possible trichords—his aim appeared to me more directed at what might be called a 'creative ethic' than at the necessity of any specific way of proceeding. In discussing the charted trichords, for instance, he was more intrigued by the ways in which re-positioning a group of pitch-classes altered the resulting harmonic effect, than in exhausting numerical or permutational potential. His deeper bits of wisdom were more generally construed: adding a fourth pitch always softens a dissonance.

Individual lessons were an hour-long and always intense experiences. The first music I brought to him was the slow movement of three for string quartet (I had been composing, then, for no more than a year.). The lesson he administered, effortlessly and un-selfconsciously, was stunning. Having quickly reviewed its four or five pages, Roberto said something to the effect that he approved my having undertaken such an economical exercise. Not catching his implication, I hesitantly questioned him, eliciting, then, an exhaustive analysis, demonstrating that the whole of my modest structure was indebted to one three-note motive. I was not quite sure how he took my protestations that I had, in fact, been working in an entirely intuitive way. This occasion established by implication what was for me his central message: one had to use everything at one's disposal in making one's music. He developed this thread, explaining that composition involved a

constant alternation between the intuitive and the rational. There was no one-fits-all equalisation to be sought but rather a continuing engagement of both aspects of the self in search of one's own optimal balance.

When I began to work on a larger quartet—what became String Quartet (1961)—I tried to enact his often emphasised complementarity between intelligence and instinct. Alain Resnais's film, *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* (1959) had stirred me with its inferential grappings between the infernal and the erotic, and I undertook a single movement structure which interleaved the violent with the tranquil. I worked out a musical architecture reflecting Resnais's editorial intercuttings, so that in a series of stages, the elegiac replaced the aggressive.

This project was my first attempt at establishing a pre-conceived architecture for a musical work, and was, in fact, a response to Gerhard's conception of temporal proportionality. That I immediately converted his concern for proportionality into a diagrammatic plan probably stemmed both from experience with my father's architectural drawings and my recently completed Engineering Physics degree. In seminar, Gerhard was then explaining to us his own practice in regard to formal planning. It was, typically, a considered middle ground between Stockhausen's more thoroughgoing but over-extended conception of time, which he rejected, and an unprincipled, formal *laissez-faire*.¹

If one arrayed a 12-note series in close position, he explained, one could then assign to the lowest pitch the status of 'horizon tone', and determine a series of 12 numbers by counting upwards by half-steps (if C were 1, then C sharp, wherever it occurred, would be 2, etc.). Once one had identified the appropriate sequence of twelve numbers, it was possible to group them (say, as three collections of four) and, summing each tetra-group, come up with a proportion of sums. If the three sums were, for example, 18 (= +1 + 2 + 3 + 12), 24 (= 4 + 5 + 7 + 8), and 36 (= 6 + 9 + 10 + 11), then one could infer an overall, formal proportionality for a 3-part work as 18 : 24 : 36, or 3 : 4 : 6. This, in Gerhard's practice at that time, also entailed hierarchic extension downwards (i.e. the '3' of the 3:4:6 would itself be similarly subdivided into the proportion 0.69: 0.92 : 1.39), so that subsidiary phrases were nested comfortably in parallel proportionality. Thus, the formal design of an entire work, viewing its temporal nature from, as it were the top down, had an in-built consistency.

In explaining how the idea of hierarchic proportionality functioned in his own music, Gerhard spoke of it as a kind of 'scaffolding' which was required in order to gain access to the large shape and required detail of a work, that could be—in an extension of the metaphor—disassembled and removed once

construction had ended. It was nonetheless a surprise, when analysing a score of his, to find that he had, from time-to-time, removed an entire section from a completed work if, after further consideration or performance, it was deemed unnecessary or disruptive to the larger flow of the whole. He went about his work in systematic ways, driven by his intelligence. But his ear was then called in to assess the outcome, and was given the final say.

Now, while this all is a good deal less arcane than what was implied in Stockhausen's positions (or, for that matter, Milton Babbitt's 'time point' procedures) for serially shaping the temporal dimension of his music, it will immediately be clear that not all numerical groupings are as straightforward as the example I gave above. Nor is it entirely natural for a composer to shoehorn an acceptably musical body of material into the 'containers' proposed by whatever proportions emerged from the composer's pre-compositional explorations.⁸ This is an instructive example of the ways in which the logical/rational can impede and thereby stimulate (as well as frustrate) intuition's course. Working at my quartet, I encountered such dilemmas constantly: what should rule? The logical structure or the intuitive imperative? In *An Inaugural Lecture*,⁹ presented to our composition seminar, Gerhard portrayed the roots of this dilemma in revealing metaphor. The following passage enables one to enter fully into the spirit of his argument:

An idea that will start an artist working can be pretty indefinite. An artist does not approve an idea by its definition. On the contrary, too much definition will tell him that the idea is already grown and, to some extent, spent. That's why a *brilliant* idea is so often a trap. We'd better beware of brilliant ideas. A fruitful idea reveals itself in the mind by a certain urgency of the desire to realise it, by a kind of dim but compelling feeling for its potential. Like a seed, or any living organism, it has parts that will decay in the growing process, while other parts will sprout. The decaying makes for fuel: it isn't necessarily total waste.

On the contrary, it is the elements that fail and fall by the wayside that generate fresh energy. It is, above all, the deliberate discardings, like pruning, that provide new drive. This is the real meaning of self-denial, of restricting and depriving oneself of muchness, of much of a muchness. Part of the growing things will produce suckers. It is not only these that need to be cut—that's elementary—it's the cutting of healthy shoots which will prove most invigorating. Every amputation is a provocation; every casualty calls forth new life.

In its first adumbration an *idea* is perhaps something like a call to adventure. It suffices that it should provide the notion of a target, of direction of aim, and,

most of all, that feeling of urgency, of intense desire to realize its felt potentiality. Yet that feeling too is often misunderstood. It is to be distrusted when it is too definite. It isn't a powerful feeling, or an emotion keenly felt that the artist translates into a work. One may often start work with some such strong definite feeling. I generally experience that when such is the case, my original feeling tends to dissipate more and more as the work proceeds, to make way for an entirely different feeling that is actually generated by the progress of the work itself. I think this is the genuine stuff.

By comparison, the affective stimulant which one may have naively thought to want to try to express, becomes something as irrelevant to the artist as the disturbing news one has read in the morning paper. There is no *self-expression* in the sense that the work comes from one's feelings. It's the other way around, one's feelings come from the work in process of growth. They are still one's own feelings, of course, but they are the feelings one didn't know about, the ones the composition unveils and reveals. They are more deeply rooted than anything you may have brought from the outside before starting to work.¹⁰

At each meeting, I would bring my evolving sketches. Roberto would prop them up on the piano desk, stop his ears with his index fingers and, frowning fiercely with concentration, *will* the music into his auditory imagination. Guidance was administered at all levels. Was I certain of that pitch? Of that spelling? Could not the effect of this passage be improved if the harmony were arrayed in a different vertical distribution? (He disputed 'inversion' as a term, preferring the more literally accurate 'mirror'.) At other moments, there would be a more general query, gently floated. Examining a cadential point—and, of course, therefore, a moment at the nexus between the rational (a sectional division) and the intuitive (the 'feel' of a close)—he said, 'You're afraid to pause, aren't you?'. And, of course, I was: struggling to adjust the authority of the spontaneous against that of the pre-established. These engagements were thrillingly demanding, but my respect for him tempered my willingness to follow up on, to play out in sufficient detail before him, the emergent awareness that sprang from the interactive testing that our lessons involved. He knew, though. Smiling sideways at me after a particularly intense exchange: 'Think of me as a lemon. Squeeze.'

The persuasiveness of Gerhard's example—the intellect, the ear, the sensibility—captivated the Ann Arbor composer group. And, because of the undocinaire balance evident in his ways, each of us was able to take from the experience elements that illuminated his particular circumstance. It all felt inevitable, as though one had been granted a revelation, entry into a realm in which

all was in a productive equilibrium. The shock of our last seminar with him was, then, all the greater. Roberto quietly informed us that nothing he had revealed could possibly be of any direct use to any among us. These ways had, after all, been adopted and adapted to conform with *his* background and creative needs. We were all individuals and it was necessary for us to work through our own developmental paths. Perhaps his teachings could provide a reference, an instance, but no more. He was correct, of course, but it took some years for me to sort through the crucial distinctions between strategies which provide viable results and those that fit ideally with my own sensibility and its needs." It emerged, in other words, that his 'amputation' was, as he had predicted, provocative of self-sufficiency; it was an opportunity to gain the invaluable insight that art, drawing as he insisted on 'the whole man,' could not be routinised or formulaic.

Gerhard's musical enthusiasms were also indirectly instructional. One of the more electrifying experiences of my student years took place at the Boston Symphony's Tanglewood summer program the following year (1961) when Gerhard returned to the United States as a co-Composer-in-Residence there with Wolfgang Fortner. The enlightened Chicago wine importer, Paul Fromm, supported an excellent and dedicated cadre of young performers there who were at the service of new music and the composition Fellows' needs. Somehow the project of spending an afternoon with the Schoenberg String Trio was floated, and members of the Lenox Quartet (Fromm, Fellows) illustrated while Gerhard quizzed, prodded, observed, and ultimately revelled in the inspired detail of this unique work. Twenty minutes might pass in exploring the sonority of particular string harmonics, seeking the most desirable node from which they might be produced with regard to the fingerings necessary to complete an allied passage. Row structure lit the way to understanding voice primacies or established allegiances among materials in relation to potentially ambiguous structural implications. The sun-drenched Hawthorne Cottage literally clattered, buzzed, and resounded for hours as we all shared in the confluence of historical perspective, physical dexterity, and—Gerhard spoke of the value that Schoenberg attributed to the 'heat' that could be aroused by intense, unbroken compositional engagement—the genius of this work itself. The undeniable coexistence of the force of tradition with the apparent (but only apparent) excesses in the almost demonic experimentalism of this work made an impression on me far deeper than had, for instance, the more genial and well-behaved Suite the preceding Spring.

Gerhard discussed at length the comparative significance of Hauer's more rigid and antiseptic approach to the nascent 12-tone ideal in relation to

Schoenberg's archly lean proposal. I have come to understand over the years how dangerous rigour in itself is as a sufficient indicator of merit. In this regard, Schoenberg, in his theoretical pronouncements, rare and sparing during the crucial '20s, was strikingly on target: enough principle to shape, not enough unprofitably to dampen intuition and invention. Gerhard was explicit in his open, pragmatic portrayal of these issues.

There were other intimations of disfavour. At a Rachmaninov concerto rehearsal led by Charles Munch at the Tanglewood orchestra shed, Roberto was like me, I am sure, feeling the tug of the Boston Symphony Orchestra's opulent sonorities in the service of those seductive tertiary extensions. He began an increasingly caustic caricaturisation of the music; he summoned up the image of a massive, bloated trunk, tottering over the perilous support of spindly-legged harmonies and undisciplined structure. I was being cautioned, and knew it.

Later, as the Tanglewood session drew to a close, we spoke elliptically about the possibility of my going to England to continue working with him. Somewhat to my surprise then (and increasingly in later years) he firmly counselled that if, for some reason, it was not possible for me to work with him, it was Luciano Berio to whom he would want me to go. But, other factors intervened and I was unable to go to England. Only after his death did Poldi tell me of Roberto's reciprocal regret. The work that I wrote in tribute to him, *The Promises of Darkness* (1975), captures, I hope, both the admiration that I felt for what I understood of his technical commitments as a composer and also an undercurrent that, though sensed, was never directly broached between us. In a letter to Poldi (11 April, 1977), I wrote about this work: 'It is in a way about one's ability (what a strange English usage) to doubt.'

Roberto once told me that *Collages*—not yet called Symphony No. 3 (1960)—written just before his Ann Arbor visit, had been concerned with 'the issue of pain in the world'. The dragon-breathed pronouncements of the tape part in this work indicate without capitulating to the presence of darker forces, of psychic as well as physical pain. I remember vividly his capacity to respond as it emerged in subtle ways from beneath the restrained (though beautiful) English crust he had acquired: I have already mentioned his strategy of crossing to the far side of Geddes Street in Ann Arbor to avoid the cemetery.

In writing a piece for Roberto, this quality, this responsiveness, was central: that darkness (an inability to perceive or know in certain contexts) gives rise to a range of feelings—constriction, freedom, pleasure, terror. I wanted this sensibility, in some form, to pervade the work. The course of the composition was meant to flow from the vague perceptions (promises), lurking in darkness,

towards their clarification. The last section evokes terror, and I quoted the opening of *Collages* there. In this context, however, it is meant to explore a different aspect of meaning from that which Roberto saw in the 'airborne sunrise' cited in his programme note: the ambiguity we can feel following moments of extraordinary affirmation. After listening to the recording that Arthur Weissberg and his Contemporary Chamber Ensemble made at the New York's Lincoln Center, Poldi wrote to me of her reactions (5 April 1977): 'Let me first of all tell how deeply I love *The Promises*: it is a wonderful work and every time I listen I feel a tremendous impact the work has on me, there is such a spirituall [*sic*] and musical communication between Roberto and you, which makes me very happy.'

Collages was written just before Roberto's visit to Ann Arbor. Perhaps, in part, because of his involvements with the BBC and with the creation of incidental music for Stratford Shakespeare productions, Gerhard was interested in the use of sound recordings and their possible manipulation through atypical uses of tape recorders. He had several machines in his home and experimented at an informal level with the potential of *musique concrete*. My guess is that he would like to have entered this world more deeply had circumstances permitted. The tape part for Symphony No. 3 is not extensive, but it is remarkably effective in making concrete the expressive aim of the work. His thoughts about the electronic medium are typically fresh:

To me the strongest point in favour of electronic music is that it allows us to distinguish the people who are musical in an absolute sense, from the people who are musical in a conventional, i.e., in a merely relative sense. The first accept electronic music, the second reject it. How does that prove my point? Quite simply: The first discover (hear) musical organisation in sound when such organization in fact exists; the second recognize (not discover) such organisation if, and only if, certain limiting conventional conditions are given.

Discovery in music requires a certain (quite certain) element of creativity. Recognition makes no higher demands than good memory and competent ear training.¹²

Evidence accumulated over that Tanglewood summer that the elevated opinion of Gerhard held by his Ann Arbor audience was shared by others who encountered him. During one tape-playing session attended by Leonard Bernstein as well as Aaron Copland and Lukas Foss, Roberto presented a tape of his Symphony No. 1 (1952-53). At its close, Bernstein immediately declared it a work of genius — his reaction, it appeared, was intensified by surprise over

the fact that this man and his music had previously escaped his attention— and stated that he would perform it with the New York Philharmonic the coming season.¹³ Whether in relation to such notable colleagues as those present at the listening session, festival staff, performing musicians, students, or Serge Koussevitzky's regal and reclusive widow, Olga, Roberto and Poldi made an unfailingly striking and endearing impact.

Encountering, over the years, several others who knew Roberto well— David Drew, Susan Bradshaw, and Sir William Clock foremost among them—I came to realise that we shared an unfortunate if fully understandable disadvantage when it came to speaking or writing formally about him, his music, his legacy. The impression that he made, as I have indicated here repeatedly, was of such depth and substance that clearly one felt obliged to treat his memory and his work with extraordinary thoroughness and dimensionality. To undertake an appraisal of his music was to embark upon a task (and, of course, an opportunity) difficult to contemplate in the midst of an already demanding professional life. Still, I have always wanted to find an occasion to share the recollections offered here, informal and incomplete though they are.

All in all, Roberto Gerhard, his music and his life left an indelible and precious mark upon me, as upon many. I continue—as I have since our now distant encounters—to find him a beacon of perhaps growing significance as shifts in cultural values increasingly call into question formerly unchallenged assumptions. Everything that I do reflects the example of Gerhard's elevated pragmatism, and, at least in regard to the technical aspects of musical art, this suits me perfectly.¹⁴ Gerhard argued for disciplined ways, but did not attempt to raise any particular strategy to the status of canon. In fact, on that same day that he admonished the Ann Arbor group to put aside his techniques, he indicated that — since he had now exposed his own ways — he intended to adopt new procedures for himself. Method of some sort was essential for him, and he portrayed that need in formal argument and informal metaphor, viz., 'It is not possible to jump into the air from swampy ground.' In the end, it has been invaluable to keep in mind the memory of one who, while remaining methodical and precise was, nevertheless, ever alive also to the necessary exception and to the value of considered accommodation.

Roger Reynolds, Del Mar, California, July 1999

Notes

1. Jan Bach (b. Forrest, Illinois, 1937) studied at the University of Illinois, Urbana. His teachers included Roberto Gerhard, Aaron Copland, Kenneth Gaburo and Thea Musgrave. Since 1966 he has taught theory and composition courses at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. The recipient of numerous awards and commissions, Bach is a prolific composer for almost every vocal and instrumental genre, and his output includes an opera, *The Student from Salamanca*, produced by Beverly Sills for New York City Opera.

2. Roger Reynolds (b. Detroit, Michigan, 1934) studied engineering physics at the University of Michigan, before turning to music, his teachers including Ross Lee Finney and Roberto Gerhard. He co-founded (with Robert Ashley and Gordon Mumma) the ONCE group in Ann Arbor. Following a four-year stay in Europe (1962-66), he accepted a fellowship from the Institute of Current World Affairs and lived for three years in Japan, where he organised contemporary music concerts. He returned to the USA in 1969 to take up a music professorship at the University of California, San Diego, a position he still holds. In 1971, he founded there the Center for Music Experiment, directing it for the next five years. Reynolds has travelled widely as composer and lecturer. His musical output covers a wide range of works, including three symphonies, four string quartets, large-scale compositions (many text-based) with theatrical dimensions, and others that mix electro-acoustic and live music, dance, film and choreography. The breadth of his creative ideas is also revealed in his books. *Mind Models: New Forms of Musical Experience* (1975) and *Form and Method: Composing Music* (2000). Reynolds was the first experimentally inclined composer since Ives to win the coveted Pulitzer Prize, for his string orchestra work, *Whispers Out of Time*.

Reynolds's own notes to this text are marked thus *.

3. Reprinted in GOM, pp. 226-233.

4. On 5 June, 1961, the BBC broadcast a chamber concert containing works by Nono, Webern, Petrassi and Mozart, and a tape, prepared by Hans Keller and Susan Bradshaw, made up of random 'bashing about' on percussion instruments and simulated electronic noises. This latter purported to be a composition by one 'Piotr Zak' and the description of it mocked the avant-garde of the time with references to 'strictly measurable quantities—frequency-ratios, velocity graphs and decibel indexes'. Although the critics reviewing the concert were unanimous in dismissing Zak's 'composition' as incoherent nonsense, the general public were left with the impression that the BBC had put out a spoof and the cognoscenti had been taken in by it.

5. See 'Functions of the Series in Twelve-Tone Composition' in GOM, p. 161.

6. *This account does not correspond with that given by Hans Moldenhauer in *Anton Von Webern* (Alfred A Knopf, New York, 1979), pp. 45[^]-56. But it strikes me as, at the least, a more likely explanation than the picture offered there of Helene Berg tearful and on her knees before Webern.

7. *Although we did not study these writings formally then, I am thinking of the sorts of positions laid out in Stockhausen's brilliant'..how time passes...' in *Die Reihe*, 3,

Musical Craftsmanship, (Universal Edition, 1957), or Babbitt's 'Twelve-Tone Rhythmic Structure and the Electronic Medium', in *Perspectives of New Music*, 1/1: 49-79. These perspectives, however well-reasoned, run counter to what perceptual psychologists have learned about our abilities to perceive and evaluate time. Gerhard's notion of formal proportionality is similarly problematic, but has the merit of less cumbersome intricacy and of the pragmatism of its author: a reasonable approach to setting out on a compositional venture that must, nevertheless, eventually pass muster with the ear. Gerhard certainly respected and referred to Stockhausen's concepts, but he appeared resistant to anything suggesting orthodoxy, even of a conceptually radical sort. [See Gerhard's, Ann Arbor lectures, 'Functions of the Series in Twelve-Note Composition', in GOM, pp. 157-173, where he discusses Stockhausen's ideas.]

8. *It is worth noting that the task of devising musical materials to 'fill' pre-determined 'containers' is by no means unknown in our music. The tyranny of duration in the case of 10- and 12-inch 78 rpm recordings was responded to inventively, if grudgingly so, for decades. Film and television composers must routinely provide a particular musical mood shaped to very precise editorial requirements. The capacity to adapt invention to pre-determined needs, then, is a skill that can be acquired in the manner of other musical abilities.

9. See note 3 above

10. GOM, pp. 226-227.

11. *This divide in my compositional practice can be seen most representatively in two works: *Quick Are the Mouths of Earth* (1964-65) which is still proportional in hierarchic fashion (though the numerical authority can be traced to the spoken durations of the words in the title rather than to horizon-tone derivations from the row), and *Blind Men* (1966), which takes a radically more perception-based approach to determining sectional durations.

12. *These remarks of Gerhard's were included in a letter from Poldi which I received in February, 1978. She was searching, in response to a request of mine, for thoughts that he might have entered in his notebooks on the subject of electronic music. [See also GOM, 'Concrete and Electronic Sound Composition', pp. 180-185 and 'Sound Observed', pp. 190-195.]

13. *Bernstein did programme the Symphony and it met with considerable acclaim. There was even a *Time* feature on the reclusive master. Regrettably, Symphony No. 2 (1957-59), considerably more thorny in concept and idiom, was not to Bernstein's taste, and this important beginning withered unfulfilled.

14. *See my *Form and Method: Composing Music* (Harwood Academic Publishers, 2000).

Chronological List of Compositions

*unpublished works

**Sonatine a Carles* (1914)

**Lied*, for voice and piano (1915-16)

*Trio No. 1 for violin, cello and piano (1917)

*Trio No. 2 for violin, cello and piano (1918)

Trio, for piano, violin and cello (1918)

*Divertimento for wind instruments (1926)

*Song-cycle, *Verger de les galanies* (1917-18)

Song-cycle, *L'infantament meravellós de Schahrazada* (1926) (1918)

Dos apunts, for piano (1921-22)

Seven Haiku, for voice and ensemble (1922, rev. 1958)

**El conde sol*, for ensemble (1927?)

*String Quartet (1927-28)

Concertino for string orchestra, arranged from String Quartet (1927-28)

Wind Quintet (1928)

*Sonata for bass-clarinet (or clarinet) and piano (1928)

*Andantino for clarinet, violin and piano (1928?)

14 Cançons populars catalanes for high voice and piano (1928) [only six were published, in a version for voice and ensemble]

*Two Sardanas, for cobla ensemble (1928-29)

**Ventall*, song for voice and piano (1930?)

Cantata, *L'alta naixença del Rei en Jaume*, for soprano, baritone, choir and orchestra (1932)

**Lassa, mesquina, quefaré puix mon amant se'n vol partir?*, for voice and piano (1932?)

**Ariel*: ballet in one act (1934)

Albada, Interludi i Dansa, for orchestra (1936)

**Cançons i arietes*, for soprano and piano (1936)

Sevillana, for ensemble (unfinished: 1936?)

**Madrigal a Sitges*, for voice and piano (2 versions) (1930?)

Ballet: *Soirees de Barcelone* (1936-39)

**La fulla el mi vol*, for voice and piano (1940s?)

- **Don Quixote*: ballet in 1 act (1st version: 1940-41)
- **The Adventures of Don Quixote*: Incidental music for BBC radio (1944)
- Sardana No. 2, for wind band (1940)
- Condonem de Pedrell*, for voice and ensemble (1941)
- Pedrelliana* for orchestra: last movement of Symphony, *Homenaje a Pedrell* (1941)
- Symphony *Homenaje a Pedrell* (1941)
- Suite No. 1: *Don Quixote* (1941)
- Alegrias*: divertissement flamenco in one act (1942)
- Suite: *Alegrias*, for orchestra (1942)
- **Six Tonadillas*: arrangements of songs by Esteve, Laserna etc. (1942)
- **Por do pasará la sierra*, for high voice and piano (1942)
- Concerto for violin and orchestra (1942-43)
- **Cádiz*: Fantasia on a zarzuela by F. Chueca and J. Valverde (1943)
- **Sevillanas*, for high voice and piano (1943)
- *Three pieces for chamber orchestra, arranged from works by Schubert (1. Rondo from Sonata in D major, D. 850; 2. *Marche militaire* in D major, D. 733; 3. *Marche caractéristique* in C major, D. 886, no. 1) (c. 1943)
- **Engenho Novo*, for high/medium voice and orchestra (c. 1943)
- **Cristóbal Colón*: music for radio play by Salvador de Madriaga (1943)
- **Tres condones toreros*, for medium voice and piano (c. 1943)
- Ballet: *Pandora* (1943⁴)
- Gigantes y cabezudos*: fantasia on a zarzuela by M.F. Caballero (c. 1943)
- **La viejecita*: fantasia on a zarzuela by M.F. Caballero (c. 1943)
- Suite: *Pandora* (1944-45)
- The Duenna*, opera in 3 acts, after Sheridan (1945—47)
- Dances from *Don Quixote*, for piano solo (1947)
- Suite No. 2: *Don Quixote* (1947)
- **Romeo and Juliet*: music for stage-production of Shakespeare's play (1947)
- *Sonata for viola and piano (1948); see Sonata for cello and piano, below
- Capriccio for solo flute (1949)
- **Cymbeline*: music for stage production of Shakespeare's play (1949)
- Three Impromptus, for piano (1950)
- String Quartet No. 1 (1950-55)
- Concerto for piano and string orchestra (1951)
- **Secret People*, music for film dir. Thorold Dickinson (1952)
- **War in the Air*: music for 5 BBC TV documentaries (1952)
- Symphony No. 1 (1952-53)

- **Conquistador*. music for radio play by Archibald McLeish (1953)
- **The Taming of the Shrew*, music for stage-production of Shakespeare's play (1953)
- **El Barberillo de Lavapies*: zarzuela by FA. Barbieri arr. Gerhard (1954)
- The Akond of Swat*, for voice and percussion (1954)
- **The Prisoner*: music for stage-production of play by Bridget Boland (1954)
- **L' Stranger*: music for radio adaptation of book by Albert Camus (1954)
- **A Midsummer Night's Dream*: music for stage-production of Shakespeare's play (1954)
- **King Lear*: music for stage-production of Shakespeare's play (1955)
- **You Know What People Are*: music for BBC TV production of J.B. Priestley's play (1955)
- **A Leak in the Universe*: music for radio play by I.A. Richards (1955)
- Concerto for harpsichord, percussion and strings (1955-56)
- **Good Morning Midnight*: music for radio production of play by Jean Rhys (1956)
- **Maria Stuart*: music for radio adaptation of Schiller's play (1956)
- Sonata for cello and piano: new version of Sonata for viola and piano (1956)
- Six French Folksongs, for high voice and piano (1956)
- Lamparilla*: overture to the zarzuela *El Barberillo de Lavapies* by FA. Barbieri (1956)
- Cantares*: Seven Spanish songs for voice and guitar, arr. Gerhard (1956)
- Sardana No. 1, arranged for wind ensemble, (1956)
- Sardana No. 2, arranged for wind ensemble (1956)
- Nonet, (1956-57)
- Symphony No.2 (1957-59)
- Fantasia for solo guitar: interlude for *Cantares* (1957)
- **Revenge for Love*: music for BBC version of play by Wyndham Lewis (1957)
- **The Unexpected Country*: music for radio play by Olwen Wymark
- **All Aboard*: music for animated film (1958)
- **Your Skin*: music for Unilever film documentary (1958)
- Dances from *Don Quixote* (1958)
- **Perities, Prince of Tyre*: music for stage-production of Shakespeare's play (1958)
- **Audiomobiles I-fV*: electronic music on tape (1958-59); no 2, DNA in reflection, used for film soundtrack (1963)
- **Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter*, for speaker and tape (1959)
- **Asylum Diary*: music for radio play directed by Christine Lavant (1959)
- Chaconne for solo violin (1959)
- **Don Carlos*: music for radio production of Schiller's play (1959)
- **Coriolanus*: music for stage-production of Shakespeare's play (1959)
- Symphony No. 3 (*Collages*), for orchestra and tape (1960)

- **Caligula*: music for radio adaptation of play by Albert Camus (1961)
- **Woyzeck*: music for radio production of Buchner's play (1961)
- **The Cherry Orchard*: music for stage production of Chekhov's play (1961)
- **The Overcoat*: music for radio adaptation of Gogol's story (1961)
- *Ten Pieces for tape (1961)
- *Interludes and arias from *The Duenna*, for mezzo-soprano and orchestra (1961)
- String Quartet No. 2 (1961-62)
- **Macbeth*: music for stage-production of Shakespeare's play (1962)
- **The Tower*: music for radio production of play by Hoffmannsthal (1962)
- **The World's Great Stage*: music for radio production of Calderón's play (1962)
- Cantares*, for voice and guitar (1962)
- Concert for Eight*, for instrumental ensemble (1962)
- Hymnody*, for instrumental ensemble (1963)
- **Sculptures, I-IV* for tape (1963)
- **The Philosopher's Den*: music for radio version of play by Zbigniew Herbert (1963)
- **This Sporting Life*: music for film dir. Lindsay Anderson (1963)
- The Plague*, for speaker, mixed chorus and orchestra (1963-64)
- **The Anger of Achilles*: music for radio adaptation of Robert Graves (1964)
- **The Count of Montecristo*: music for BBC TV adaptation of Dumas's novel (1964)
- **Funnyhouse of a Negro*: music for radio play by A. Kennedy (1964)
- **Macbeth*: music for BBC TV production of Shakespeare's play (1964)
- **For Whom the Bell Tolls*: music for radio adaptation of Hemingway's novel (1965)
- Concerto for Orchestra (1965)
- Epithalamion* for orchestra (1966)
- Claustrophobia: a page for John Cage*, for harps and radios (1966)
- **The Man Born to be King*: music for radio play by Dorothy L. Sayers (1966)
- Gemini*, for violin and piano (1966) [originally entitled *Duo Concertante*]
- Symphony No.4 'New York' (1967)
- Metamorphoses*: re-working of Symphony No. 2 (1967-68), unfinished
- Libra*, for instrumental ensemble (1968)
- Leo*, for instrumental ensemble (1969)

Index of Works by Robert Gerhard Mentioned in the Text

- Albada, Interludi i Dansa* 37
Alegrías 42
AU Aboard 58
L'alta naixença del Rei en Jaume 36—37
The Anger of Achilles 11, 80n
Ariel 37
Asylum Diary 58
Audiomobiles I-IV 60
- El Barberillo de Lavapiés* 46n
- Caligula* 50
Cancionero de Pedrell 43
Tres canciones toreras 43
7 canciones de villuela 43
Cançons i arietes 38
14 Cançons populars catalanes 25n,
29; (orchl. version) *Sis Cançons
populars catalanes* 25n, 37
Cantares for voice and guitar 81
Capriccio for flute 47, 81
Chaconne for violin 61, 62
Claustrophobia 79n
Concert for Eight 65, 69-70
Concertino for string orchestra 29, 43
Concerto for harpsichord,
percussion and strings 60, 62,
107
Concerto for Orchestra 65, 72, 81
Concerto for piano and string orchestra
56, 60, 62
Concerto for violin and orchestra
43-44, 60
Coriotanus 58, 60
Cristobal Colón 43
- Don Quixote* (ballet) 42, 44, 46n, 47
Don Quixote, dances from 73
Don Quixote: Suite No. 1 41, 42
Don Quixote: Suite No. 2 42
Dos apunts, for piano 22-23, 24, 49, 59
The Duenna 43, 44, 48
Duo, Les vídues vulgars 38
Duo concertante 73; see also *Gemini*
- Engheno Novo* 43
Epithalamion 66, 73, 74
- Fantasia* for guitar 61
For Whom the Bell Tolls 73
- Gemini* 66, 73, 74, 81
Gigantes y cabezudos 46n
- Hymnody* 49, 65, 70-71, 73, 77
- Three Impromptus* 47, 49, 81
- King Lear* 58
- Lament for the death of a bullfighter* 58
Lamparilla Overture 46n
A Leak in the Universe 58
Leo 62, 66, 72, 74, 81, 86, 89
Libra 49, 62, 66, 72, 74, 77, 81, 86,
87-89
Lmfantament meravellós de Schahrazada
22, 31
- Metamorphoses* (re-working of
Symphony No. 2) 61-62, 66

- Nonet 49, 57, 59-60, 62, 81, 116
Pandora 42,43,45; Suite 43
Pedrelliana 43
Pericles, Prince of Tyre 58
 Piano Trio 22,31,94
The Plague 50,65,71-72
Por do posaré la sierra 43
The Prisoner 58

Sample Piece 54n
 Two Sardanas 29, 36
Secret People 50-51, 54n
Seven Haiku 23, 24, 29, 49, 70, 81
Sevillanas 43
Soirees de Barcelone 37, 39n, 41, 46,
 99, 104
 Sonata for cello and piano 43, 60
 Sonata for viola and piano 43, 60
 String Quartet No. 1 1, 47, 57-58, 59,
 60,74
 String Quartet No. 2 65, 69, 70, 72, 74
Symphony, Homenaje a Pedrell 43
 Symphony No. 1 47, 51-53, 56, 60, 73,
 127-128, 130n
 Symphony No.2, 58, 60, 61, 66, 130n
 see also *Metamorphoses*
 Symphony No. 3 (*Collages*) 65, 68-69,
 72,76,81, 126-127
 Symphony No. 4 'New York' 62,66,72,
 74,75,76,81,86-87

The Taming of the Shrew 49
This Sporting Life 65, 79n
Six Tonadillas 43

The Unexpected Country 58

War in the Air 50
 Wind Quintet 27,29,31,58

Your Skin 58

General Index

- ADLAN 34, 38n
aleatory music 75, 79n, 80n, 109
Albéniz, Isaac 22, 41, 104-105
Alavedra, J. 99, 112n
Aldeburgh Festival 49
Anderson, Lindsay 54n
 This Sporting Life 65, 79n
Anglès, Higiní 34, 53n, 98
Apollinaire, G. 26n
Arp, Hans 100, 101
Ars Musicae 49, 53n
Ashley, Robert 117, 129n
Associació de Música de Camara 28,
 29, 36
Associació Intima de Concerts 35
Associació Obrera de Concerts 35
Atherton, David 37, 83

Babbitt, Milton 108-109, 123, 130n
 Du 121
Bach, Jan 7, 129n
 tribute to Gerhard 115-116
Bach, J.S. 22, 56, 93
 Prelude and Fugue in E flat major
 (oren. Schoenberg) 35
Badia d'Agustí, Concepció 22, 25n, 33,
 35
Ball, Hugo 100
Bamert, Mathias 37
Barbieri, FA. 42
Bartók, Bela 23, 35, 38
 Mikroskosmos 41
 String Quartet No. 5 35

Bartomeu, Josep 48, 53n, 56
Basil, Colonel de (ballet company) 37,
 41, 46n, 104
BBC 15, 25n, 41, 42, 43, 48, 50, 55, 58,
 65, 70, 73, 76, 81, 118, 127, 129n
BBC Radiophonic Workshop 61
BBC Symphony Orchestra 37, 39n, 68,
 72
BBC Theatre Orchestra 42, 53n
Beckett, Samuel 106-107
Beethoven, string quartets 93
 Violin Concerto 99
Belwin-Mills (publishers) 59
Benguerel, Xavier 31
Berg, Alban 24, 28, 36, 119
 Lyric Suite 35
 Violin Concerto 35, 119
 Wozzeck Fragments 35
Berg, Helene 129n
Berio, Luciano 126
Berkeley, Lennox 39n
Berkshire Music School (Tanglewood)
 7, 65, 115, 125-127
Bernstein, Leonard 127-128, 130n
Blancafort, Manuel 53n
Bloom, Art 115
Boosey & Hawkes (publishers) 59
Boulez, Pierre 75, 80n
 Le Marteau sans mattre 56
 Structures, Book I 75, 121
Bradshaw, Susan 128, 129n
Brahms 22
Braque 28

- Brennan, Gerald 48, 53n
 Britten, Benjamin 39n
 Brosa, Antoni 43, 44
 Burra, Edward 47
 Busoni 28
- Caballé, Montserrat 25n
 Caballero, M.F. 42, 46n
 Cabaret Voltaire 99, 100, 101
 Cage, John 65, 75, 79n, 80n
 Music of Changes 80n
 Callao, Concepció 38
 Cambridge University Musical Club 41
 Camus, Albert 20, 47
 Caligula 50
 L'Etranger 50
 The Plague 50,71
 Carner, Josep 10,36,38
 Carratalà, Maria 38
 Casals, Pau 25n, 27, 53n, 54n, 98-99,
 112n
 Orquestra Pau Casals 35, 36
 Castell, Dr (Pseudonym of Robert
 Gerhard) 28
 Centre for Musical Documentation 56
 Cervantes, M. de 42
 Cheltenham Festival 65, 72
 Club 49 49, 56, 59, 60, 80n
 Copland, Aaron 115,127
 Cortot, Alfred 25n
 Courvoisier, Walter 92, 95n
 Covent Garden 47
 Cowell, Henry 24
 Crumb, George 117
Cultura 7,25n
 cummings, e.e. 73
- D'Arcy Thomson, *Growth and Form*
 120
 Dante, *De Vulgari Eloqui* 67
 Darlington Summer School 59
- Debussy 22,23
 Six Epigraphes Antiques 41
 Delas, Josep Lluís 60
 Dent, Edward J. 41, 45-46n, 53, 103
 Del Mar, Norman 49, 59, 72
 Dickinson, Thorold 9, 50, 54
 Secret People 50-51, 54n
 Doesburg, Petro von 41, 45n, 99, 100,
 101
 Doesburg, Theo von 41,99
 Domènech, Eugènia 31-33
 Domènech i Muntaner, Lluís 31-33
 Dorati, Antal 37, 71, 72, 73, 104
 Drew, David 13, 17n, 39n, 83n, 89, 90n,
 128
- EDIGSA 73
 Editions Maurice Sénart 22
 Editorial Labor 34
 Einstein, Albert 23, 28
 Eisler, Hanns 102
 Eisenberg, Maurice 99
 Escalas, Romà 53n
- Falla, Manuel de 22, 23, 24, 25n, 47
 Feichtegger, Leopoldina *see* Gerhard, Poldi
 Ferber, Albert 49
 Finney, Ross Lee 117, 119, 129n
 Foix, Josep Vicenç 26n, 31,37
 Fornesa, Pietat, (wife of Joaquim Homs)
 14,34,44,45,48,60,72,75
 Fortner, Wolfgang 115,125
 Foss, Lukas 127
 Franco, Francisco 5
 Franco Gil, Joseph M. 77
 Freud, Sigmund 28
 Fromm, Paul 125
- Gaburo, Kenneth 15, 116, 129n
 Garcia, Torres 31
 Gardner, John 59

- Gassol, Ventura 34, 36
 Gavin, Barrie, *The Explorers* (film about Gerhard) 80n
 Gerhard, Carles 19
 Gerhard, Ferran 19, 71
 Gerhard, Poldi 13, 14, 17n, 28, 29, 33, 35, 38n, 42, 45, 46n, 49, 51, 58, 60-61, 75, 76, 77-78, 81, 83, 102, 111, 115, 116, 118, 119, 126-127, 130n
 Gerhard, Robert
 writings:
Apunts (originally called *Escritos y apuntes de un escrit or*) 7, 8-9, 19, 25n, 74, 97-113
Concrete and Electronic Music 63n
Developments in Twelve-Tone Music 48, 59
England, Spring 1945 42
Functions of the Series in Twelve-Note Composition 130n
Inaugural Lecture, An 117, 123—124
 letter to Schoenberg (1923) 6, 24, 91-95
The Muse and Music Today 16, 17n, 67-68
Sound Observed 58, 130n
Tonality in Twelve-Tone Music 48, 74, 79n
 Giacometti, Augusto 101
 Gimpel, Bronislav 60
 Gispert, Enric 53n, 71
 Clock, William 42, 59, 81, 104-105, 118, 128
 tribute to Gerhard 82-83, 83n
 Gomis, Agnes 71
 Gomis, Joaquim 76
 Gomis, Ricard 34, 56, 57, 70, 71, 76
 Gonzalez, Julio 34
 Gorman, Herbert 113n
 Goya 48
 Granados, Enric 21, 25n, 104-105
 Graves, Robert 71
The Anger of Achilles 80n
 Grigorieff, Serge 104
 Grup Instrumental Català 70, 80n
 Hàba, Alois 47
 Halkin Conservatoire, Boston 36
 Hauer, Josef Matthias 47, 125-126
 Hitler 102
 HMV 76
 Hochberg, Morris & Sylvia 73
 Homs, Joaquim 5-7, 10, 55-56, 75-76, 95n
 profile 10
El caminant i el mar 10
 Three Impromptus 56
 Octet for wind 77
Polifonia 56
Presències 12, 77
 Piano Sonata No. 2 56-57
Seis poemes de Josep Carner 12
 Quartet No. 6 75
 Quartet No. 7 77
Rhumbs 54n
 Trio for flute, oboe and bass-clarinete 55-56, 57
 Homs, Pietat 8, 14, 45, 77
 Institut d'Estudis Vallencs 8, 38n
 ISCM (International Society for Contemporary Music) 10, 25n, 34, 36, 37, 38, 41, 45n, 51, 56, 57, 69, 95n
 Ives, Charles 24
 Jacobs, Paul 115
 Jalowetz, Henrich 27
 James, William 47
 Janàcek 23

- Joia* (magazine) 31
 Joos, Kurt 43
 Joyce, James 28, 106-107
 Finnegans Wake 106-107
 Junoy, Josep M. 23, 26n

 Kafka, Franz 50
 Kahn, R.F. archive 45n
 Kandinsky, Vassily 28
 Kay, Norman 83n
 Keller, Hans 118, 129n
 Khachaturian 104-105
 Klee, Paul 28
 Fishers 63n
 The Thinking Eye 45
 Koechlin, Charles 93
 Kolisch, Gertrude, *see* Schoenberg,
 Gertrude (second wife)
 Kolisch Quartet 28
 Kolisch, Rudolf 28
 Koussevitzky award 116
 Koussevitzky Foundation 65
 Koussevitzky, Olga 128
 Koussevitzky, Serge 128
 Krenek, Ernst 36
 Kurth, Ernst 93, 95n

 Lamana, Josep M. 49, 53n
 Lambert, Constant 41
 Lamote, Joan 38
 Larrocha, Alicia de 25n
 Le Bon, Marcel 51
 Lenox String Quartet 115
Lex Six 23
Listener. The 90n, 118
 Loeb, David 115
 London Sinfonietta 46n, 83
 López-Picó, Josep M. 22
 Lutoslawski 69, 80n

 Macdonald, Calum 37
 Macnaughten Concerts 81
 McLuhan, Marshall 78, 79n, 110-111, 113n
 Madariaga, Salvador de 48, 53n
 Cristobal Colón 43
 Malraux, Andre 48, 53n
 Marcelle, Pauline 45
 Marinetti 26n
 Marshall, Frank 21, 25n
 Maristany, Carles F. 49
 Mason, Colin 83n
 Massine, Léonide 37
 Mayer, Lady 46n
 Mayer, Robert (Sir) 46n
 Melos Ensemble 70
 Mestres-Quadreny, Josep M. 70, 71,
 79-80n
 Mewton-Wood, Noel 49
 Milan, Luis 43
 Milhaud, Alain 70
 Mines, Anatole 43
Mirador 34
 Miró, Joan 26n, 31, 34, 37, 41, 99, 102
 The Wine Bottle 113n
 Mitchell, Donald 59
 Modenhauer, Hans 129n
 Monn, Haprsichord Concerto (arr.
 Schoenberg) 99, 112n
 Monod, Jacques-Louis 70
 Monteverdi 53n
 Mozart 106
 Mumma, Gordon 129n
 Munch, Charles 126
 Música Oberta 49, 69, 70, 71, 77, 81
 Mussolini 29

 Neaman, Yfrah 60
 New York Philharmonic Orchestra 76,
 128
 Nonell Isidre 25n
 Nono, Luigi 58

- Olivier, Laurence 60
 Orga, Ates 83n
 Ord, Boris 53n
 Orr, Margarit 41
 Oxford University Press 59
- Padrós, Jaume 56
 Palau de la Musica Catalana 28, 31,33,
 71
 Paris, Universal Exhibition 34
 Park Lane Group 81
 Parrenin Quartet 57, 69, 74, 117
 Parris, Robert 115
 Patxot i Jubert, Rafael 62-63
 Pedrell, Felip 14, 21, 22, 33, 43, 92
La Celestina 43
 Penderecki 69
 Petrassi 129n
 Picabia 102
 Picken, Lawrence 59
 Picasso 25n, 74
Guernica 34
 Pisador 43
 Planck 23,28
 Prats, Joan 34,71,72,75,76,78
 Prigogine, Ylia 67, 79n
 Proust, Marcel 28, 33
À la recherche du temps perdu 28
 Prowse, Keith (publishers) 59
 Prussian Academy of Arts (Berlin) 29
- Rachmaninov 126
 Raikes, Raymond 110
 Rambert, Marie 42
 Ravel, Maurice 22, 23, 94
 Récamier, Madame (pension) 99, 102
Reihe, Die 129-130n
 Resnais, Alain *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*
 122
 Reverdy 26n
 Revista de Cata/unva 34
- Reynolds, Karen 118
 Reynolds, Roger 7, 9, 116, 129n
Blind Men 130n
Quick are the Mouths of Earth 130n
The Promises of Darkness 126
 String Quartet 122
 tribute to Gerhard 117-128
- Riba, Carles 31
 Richter, E.F. 92, 95n
 Richter, Hans *Dada* 112n
 Rilke, Rainer Maria 100, 112n
 Robinson, Stanford 42, 44, 48
 Rodin, August 100, 112n
 Roesger, Karl 92, 95n
 Roig, Enric 31, 38n
 Rosbaud, Hans 56, 58, 60
 Rubió i Balaguer, Jordi 98
 Rufer, Josef 27, 29
 Ruffi, Pilar 38
 Rusinol, Santiago 25n
 Russell, Bertrand 47
- Sadler's Wells Ballet 47
 Saint Elmo 20, 25n
 SalóTunell 70,71,77
 Salter, Lionel 48^9, 53n
 Salvat-Papasseit, Joan 73, 80n
 Sànchez-Juan, Sebastià 31
 Santanaya, George 120
 Santos, Carles 70
 Sarró, Dr 28
 Sartre, Jean-Paul 50
 Sastre, Ramon 31
 Satie, Eric 23
 Saumell, Dr 19
 Scherchen, Hermann 38, 43, 46n, 120
 Schoenberg, Arnold 5,6, 13, 14,23-29,
 30n,33,35-36,44,47,55,67,
 71,75,83,97-98, 119, 126
 compositions:
 Cello Concerto 98-99, 112n

- Klavierstück No. 2, op. 33b 35
 8 Lieder, op. 6 35
Moses und Awn 25,58,116
*Music for the Accompaniment of
 a Film Scene* 36
Pelleas und Melisande 35
 Five Piano Pieces, op. 23 27
Pierrot Lunaire 28,93
 Serenade 27
 String Quartet No. 1 35
 String Trio 125
 Suite, op. 25 27
 Suite, op. 29 120
Verklärte Nacht 35
 Wind Quintet 27
 writings:
Harmonielehre 27,93
 letter to Gerhard 95n
 Schoenberg, Gertrude (second wife) 24,
 28,35, 116
 Schoenberg, Mathilde 28
 Schoenberg, Núria (daughter) 35,58
 Schubert 43
Unfinished Symphony 36
 Schumann 22
Score, The (magazine) 38n, 42, 58,63n,
 74
 issue devoted to Gerhard 58-59
 Schwartz, Rudolf 68
 Schwitters, Kurt 101, 112n
 Serrallonga, Joan (pseudonym of Robert
 Gerhard) 43,46n
 Sert, Josep Lluís 34,41,72,99
 Sessions, Roger 76
 Shakespeare *Tempest, The* 37
 productions at Stratford:
Coriolanus 60
Taming of the Shrew, The 49
 Shawe-Taylor, Desmond 83n
 Sheridan, *Duenna, The* 43
 Sills, Beverly 129n
 Simonovich, Konstantin 77
 Smith, Sydney 41, 46n
 Soler, Antoni, Six Quintets 34
 Stanley Quartet 69
 Stefan, Paul 91,95n
 Stockhausen 75, 80n, 123, 129-130n
 Strauss, Hugo 21,92
 Stravinsky, Igor 28, 93, 104-105, 112n
Histoire du Soldat 35
Orpheus 48
 Serenade in A 41
Le Sacre du Printemps 93
Three Japanese Lyrics 23
 Tchaikovsky 112n
Tempo (magazine) 42
 Terradelles, Domènec 38n
La merope 34
 Thomas, Dylan 111,113n
 Thorpe, W.H. 83n
 Torres García, Joaquim 31
 Tort, Raimon 71
 Trend, J.B. 41,103
 Trueta, Dr Josep 78, 80n, 81
 Universal Edition (Vienna) 36
 University of Cambridge, Library 8
 University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) 7,
 61,65,69, 117
 Valderràbano, Enrique de 43
 Valois, Ninette de 47
 Valéry, Paul 33, 50, 82
Mon Faust 50
 Vàsquez, Juan 43
 Vilalta, Antoni 35
 Villa-Lobos, H. 104-105
 Vlad, Roman 59
 Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde* 93
 Walker, Geoffrey 39n
 Webern, Anton 23, 24, 28, 35, 36, 37,

- 38n, 58, 59, 63n, 97, 98, 112n,
116, 119, 120, 129n
compositions:
 Passacaglia, op. 1 36, 98
 Six Pieces for Orchestra, op. 6 36
 Variations for piano, op. 30 59
Weil, Simone 47
Weissberg, Arthur 127
White, Julian 39n
Wiener, Norbert 107-108, 113n
Whitehead, A.N. 47, 109-110, 113n,
120
Wilson, Edward M. 48, 53n
'Zak, Piotr' 129n
Zervos 48