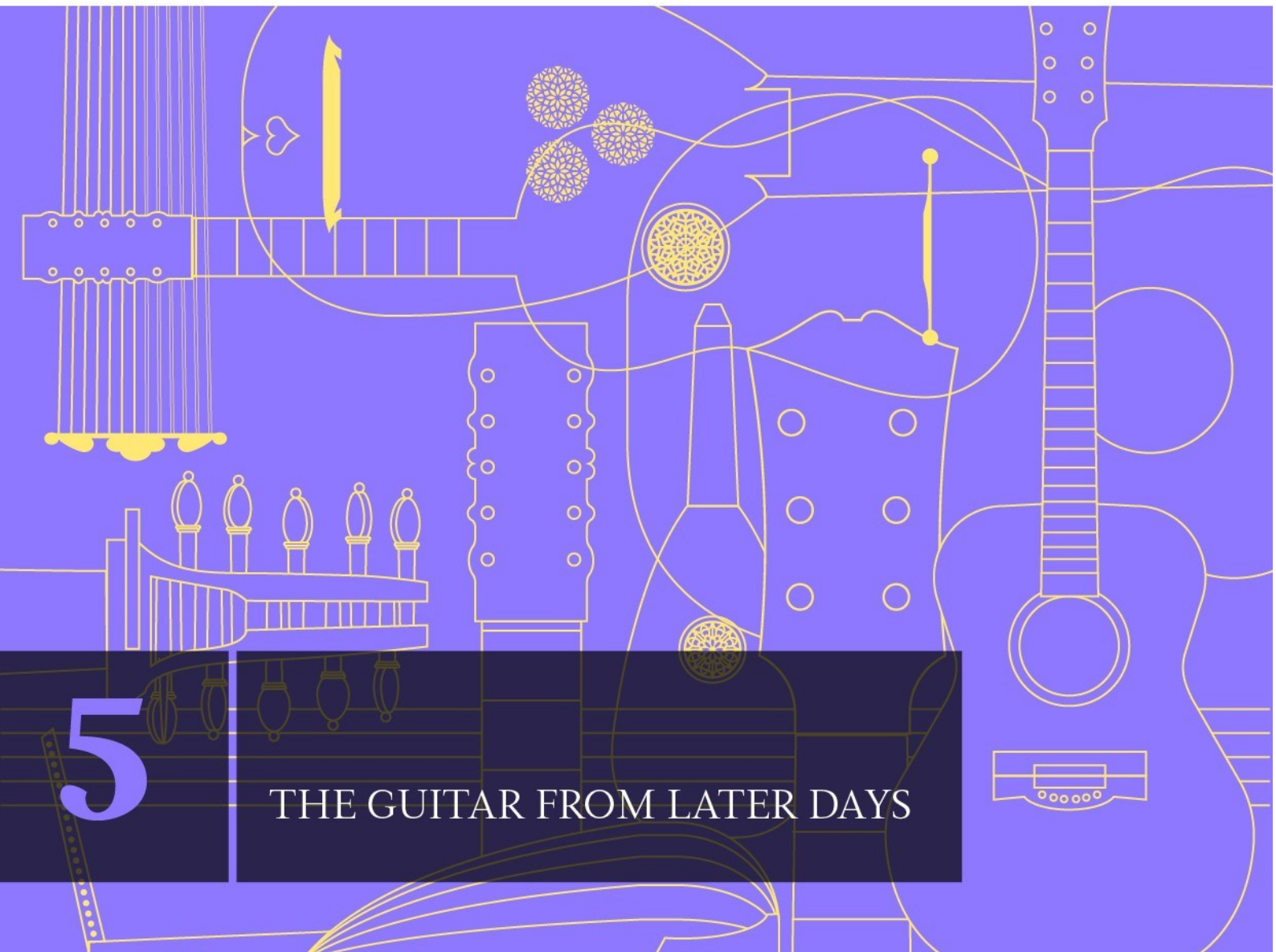


MUSIC FOR GUITAR, LUTE AND VIHUELA *THROUGH THE AGES*

LANCE BOSMAN



5

THE GUITAR FROM LATER DAYS



**MUSIC FOR GUITAR,
LUTE AND VIHUELA**
THROUGH THE AGES

VOL 5: THE GUITAR FROM LATER DAYS



PREVIEWS

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‘Woman with a guitar.’ By the French artist Roger Bissère (1886–1964).

69. The Modern Age. Liberated energies

Astir in the late 19th century, radically new conceptions in design, technology, painting and music marked the advent of Modernism. If but tremors then, they nonetheless caused hairline cracks in the edifices of Western establishments. Alongside those artisans, painters, composers who cherished their legacies, invigorating them, the harbingers of modernism edged forward or struck out. They hailed the new age with stylistic innovations, fresh viewpoints with untried assemblies and novel sound combinations. Some ventured alone; others joined ranks of like-minded spirits united by credos, manifestos. One group active in the first years extolled the wonders of the machine age and actually proclaimed themselves 'Futurists'. They and others, with pranksters among them, paraded art as farce. To amuse, to bore, antagonize. Mischievously they aimed to shock spectators out of their complacency. They cut loose from the past, rejecting age-old practices. For sure the 20th century has had its revolutionaries; and not least mavericks whose radical innovations and haywire exhibits are still met with perplexity, amusement and shudders.

After the carnage of the First World War, a further spirit of liberation seized those progressives so disposed. They embraced technology and innovative designs with the belief that they befitted an optimistic society now free of conflict. Before long the emblems of Modernism infiltrated everyday life. Catching the eye of the population at large, the cinema and theatre became arenas. Robotic mechanical bodies twitch and glide across stage and screen of those early century showings. Imagery reflecting the turmoil of metropolitan life takes on tower-block silhouettes and city sounds. Symbolic of the times now, girders, glass, concrete. New constructions were fashioned at the Bauhaus, a pioneering establishment of modern art and design spanning the years 1919 to 1939. Promoting Modernism, the aims of the Bauhaus were to free students from conventions and to unify crafts with industry. The innovatory mediums at hand were those ripe for change in painting, sculpture, ceramics, architecture, textiles, furniture, graphics, product design, theatre, photography and motion film.

If appreciation of much modernist art and design as exhibits eluded the average citizen, it nevertheless touched on their lives through daily contact. Entering the office a visitor is now met with minimalist decor, angular tubular steel chairs. Mass production gained momentum, invading the consumer market. Occupying domestic surroundings now, fitted kitchens and colourful curvilinear patterns decorating fabrics and furnishings.

Glancing movements in art, a major departure from overt representation was Impressionism. As though viewing their subjects through a heat haze, a sea mist, Impressionist painters strove to impart diffuse responses; outlines and particulars blur in iridescence. The French exemplar of this movement was Claude Monet (1840–1926) with his legendary *Impression: Sunrise* of 1872. In this the silhouettes of merchant ships are discerned in a mist surrounding a darkened boatman shrouded more so by streaks of an orange-red sun. Such were the subjects favoured by Impressionists, of hazy landscapes and scenes of water and light in various transient states, sprinkling, lapping, tossing. A seascape flecked with sunspots merges into the lighter washes of the sky.

70. Music of the 20th Century. Some considerations

If the unsuspecting audience who settled into their seats for the premiere of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* in 1913 anticipated a ballet of pirouetting ballerinas and prancing males in white tights, they were in for a jolt. The curtain opened to unveil a barbaric ceremony of a Russian pagan tribe. Beholding a choreography of sacrificial dances, the ears of the spectators were assailed too by a glittering orchestration spiked with discords and mordant syncopations. Hardly surprising then that the first performance received a somewhat mixed reception. Indeed a furore broke out, with skirmishes between those for and against. Of musical forerunners of modern music, Stravinsky must be held to account as one such firebrand. And another Russian ranked alongside, Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915) for his witches' brew of philosophy and mysticism. From him *Prometheus – The Poem of Fire* (1910) is a spiritual cataclysm for piano, orchestra and wordless choir. Moreover, listeners were to be regaled with releases of incense and lights splayed through a 'colour organ'. Another landmark of modernism we could say was Richard Strauss's opera *Elektra* from 1909. A kaleidoscopic orchestration of sweeping dissonance and wavering tonalities depicts a claustrophobic world of violent extremes relating the legend of a stricken woman wracked with guilt. From the same year issued the dissonant whirlpool of Arnold Schoenberg's monodrama of a distraught soprano's search for her lover, *Erwartung*. These masterpieces emerged at the dawn of the 20th century. Standard-bearers, if by them alone, musical modernism had arrived.

An art in flux

With the advantage of hindsight the traditions of Western music can be charted and defined. Distanced in time, we have a chronological vantage point from which to scan successive musical styles. Duly documented, their inceptions and declines are milestoned across the centuries. Categorized and period-stamped we have the advantage of drawing retrospective assessments – that is, until the 20th century dawned. Were not the eruptions of new styles from the early decades bewildering enough, they multiply still. So many contemporary works are unique, peculiar to themselves. In this surrounding cacophony, some idioms with their roots in the past are imbued with later lustres; others have taken seemingly radical leaps into their own enigmatic sound worlds. Even so, old ways have far from been eclipsed by the newer. Music of the 20th century has taken in its sweep a welter of cross-currents, invigorated with revivals, reactionary idioms, avant-garde and more besides. On a broader scale, through global communications spanning oceans and bridging continents, Western and Oriental cultures have criss-crossed frontiers to their mutual benefit. Within immediate earshot now are strains from distant lands, with ever-new and colourful exotic scales and harmonies to garnish the melting pot of latter-day Western sound resources.

71. Twentieth Century Music Movements

Modern music has burgeoned through links with the past, transitions and radical innovations. Across the expanse of the 20th century it spread-eagled with a bewildering multiplicity of styles. Individual paths were forged, traditions revitalized, reverses undertaken, all co-existing with radical breakthroughs. For music too has had its revolutionaries who regarded received values as played out. Like painters they too began afresh with blank canvasses in mind of entirely new conceptions.

From the earlier landmarks of Modernism in painting and music came further sonic eruptions in the wake of World War I. Though by no means did these departures and others supersede all that had gone before. Amid overlaps and cross-currents were those composers who chose not to jettison their cultural heritage but extend and rejuvenate it. Sonata forms were recast, dance suites, variations. Miniature and expansive musical evocations healthily endured, alluding to rural landscapes of Europe, the Americas and beyond. As easy on the ear can these be as a bowl of flowers is to the eye.

Soon into the century this diversity of idioms took root. On hold during World War II they were to resurge in the optimism of the post-war years. Seized with the experimental verve abroad in the mid-century, radicals challenged inherited orders. Some outrightly renounced them, regarding institutional dictates as decadent. Shunning the past, they let loose their imagination in revolutionary ways. One casualty was the time-honoured process of development – wherein themes are declared, thematic margins staked out and destinations secured. Instead, why not piece together harmonious and dissimilar events at will. Melodic contours with their reciprocating rises and tapers are waived. Flickering sonorities with opposing and overlapping planes of activity are now heard as sonic mosaics in a timeless flux. Seemingly directionless, mobile and static, each event exists for that instant.

72. Guitar Music of Recent Times.

An overview

Striking out

Receding as the 19th century progressed, the guitar then gradually fell into stride with broad musical advances of the 20th century. Showpieces for it from the early years of this time now stand as enduring landmarks of the instrument's reaches into contemporary music. Players then and since have premiered new works and widened the guitar's exposure through worldwide festivals, publications and recordings. Diverse collections circulate from all corners of Europe and across seas to North and South America, Australia and Japan. Reflecting this universal influx, programmes of solo guitar recitals nowadays might well wing continents, embodying Venezuelan waltzes, Spanish evocations and stylistic cross-fusions.

In addition to contributions from guitarists themselves are those by recent composers within the musical mainstream. Through their efforts and those of players, the guitar has proved itself equal to the aforementioned '-isms' and more. Music with nationalistic and neo-Classical leanings abides with progressive and radical traits. Besides which the instrument's hitherto undisclosed acoustic sound effects have yielded unique tangents of contemporary music. Over and above the guitar's normal note range, its tonal palette has now been augmented with a battery of percussive devices and weird sonorities. For illustrative purposes special effects are applied to depict actions, to conjure scenes and engender atmospheres. On the other hand they are disposed in canvasses of bristling tone colours. Lurching the instrument into another and often kaleidoscopic dimension, these explorations don't set out to charm. Taken together then, this proliferation of works for guitar had by the close of the 20th century amounted to thousands of titles.¹

¹ Vincenzo Poggi lists over 7000 composers and 35,000 compositions for solo guitar, voice and guitar and various instrumental ensembles including the guitar from 1900 onwards. Poggi 2002.

73. Musical Resources of Late

Within the turnovers of 20th century music, countless novel harmonies have sprung up. Vibrant, bristling, mellow, among them too are those savoured for their evocations, sounding somehow of faraway places, a distant past. Alongside are innumerable others, swallowed in the eddies of recent music. Singular, nameless, they exist only for the instant within the compositions they inhabit. Across the board then, between those received, new-found and ephemeral, a boundless expanse of harmony has flourished; and much of it lies within reach of the fingerboard.

Yet for all these newcomers there were still rich seams of harmony enduring from the late 19th century. Great swathes in fact, lingering in the wake of Romanticism. Indeed, many composers since have not discarded this heritage but enriched it. At its core are time-honoured triads. Major-minor staples, enlarged and recast proliferate in music with national and neo-Romantic leanings, in popular idioms and jazz. They are also a driving force in later trends such as Minimalism and the stylistic cross-fusions of post-Modernism.

Extended harmony

Just as primary colours are tinged with secondary pigments, common chords are likewise relished with tonal additives. Grafted to major-minor triads they imbue them with fresh lustres. In such cases triadic formations such as C and G major are augmented with 6ths, 7ths and 9ths, Exx.73.1a, 73.1c. In the role of dominant chords they are resolved by F and C major/minor), Exx. 73.1b, 73.1d:

Ex. 73.1a–d. Triadic extensions of C and G major/minor.

Ex. 73.1a Ex. 73.1b *dominants* Ex. 73.1c Ex. 73.1d *dominants*

C6 C6/9 Cmaj.7 Cmaj.7/9 Cm7 Cm7b5 C7b5 C9 C13 -Fmaj.7/9 G6 G6/9 Gmaj.7 Gmaj.7/9 Gm7 Gm7b5 G7b5 G9 G13 - Cmaj.7/9



Extended chords serve as substitutions for routine harmonizations. Llobet treated them so in his settings of Catalan folksongs, Ex 73.2:

Ex. 73.2. M. Llobet (Arr.): *El Mestre* (1910)

Andante

molto espressivo Dm6 D9 G9 — Cmaj..7



74. Extended Tonality – towards Atonality

Swivelling tonalities

Diatonic tonality, the bedrock upon which Western music rested for centuries, has since undergone widespread upheavals. Billowing with chromaticism, by the late 19th century it was by then bursting at the seams. Melodies took oblique flights and harmony expanded with additives and cumulative chromatics. What were once defined major-minor key orbits had by now become distended and blurred. Reciprocating tonic and dominant phrase folds were ever more elongated, their cadences postponed or evaded. Yet still, tonal music has prevailed. Far from a spent force, it resurged across the musical fronts of the 20th century. Perpetuated in neo-Romanticism, it has also thrived in other reaches of modern music. Tonal fixtures abide, though no longer are they necessarily the nubs of major-minor keys. Indeed, several tonal pivots might now figure within the course of one composition. Without modulatory cadences of old to pinpoint them, they are nudged by directional tones, leaning chords or assertive pedal points. By means of such prompters, one or several vacillating tonalities are touched on or engaged.

Scales

Amid the receding swells of diatonicity, other scales edged through. Receiving a fresh boost, the modes. Though long since largely superseded by the major and minor scales, they were never entirely usurped. Enduring in European folksong, they also infiltrated broader musical arenas. Impressionist composers revived them; and in the guise of neo-modality they flourished in orchestral evocations. Modality rears up in such as Vaughan Williams's pastorals, Bartók's invocations of Balkan music, and it filters through Spanish settings as the Phrygian. Also sidling back, age-old pentatonic scales. Five-note arrays, they have underpinned folk music from the Hebrides, within Europe and the Far East.² Like the modes, pentatonics imbue recent music an ancient or exotic tinge. Alongside these perennials, scales without historical pedigrees have also taken hold. Not, as it were, the products of natural evolution, they figure in 20th century music as so-called 'synthetic' types. Among them is the 'octatonic' with eight notes of alternating semitones and tones: B, C, D, E-flat, F, etc. (see Ex. 79.2). Stravinsky for one drew on this for his *Les Noces* (1922). Incidentally this scale can be drawn upon as an improvisatory turn around a diminished 7th chord. Bdim.7: B, D, F, A-flat. Gaining more currency is a sequence of equidistant steps, the 'whole-tone scale'.

The whole-tone scale

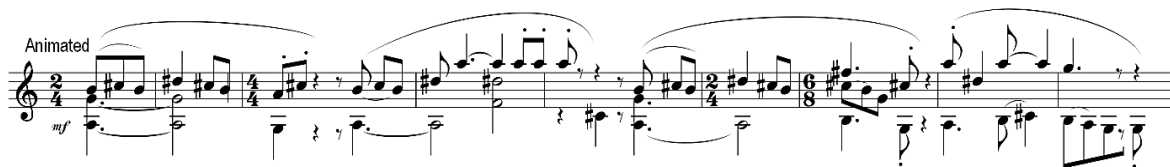
According with its name the whole-tone scale ascends by one-tone strides: A, B, C-sharp, D-sharp, F, G, A. Without the push-pull of tonic and dominant bearings or the give and take of semitone and whole-tone steps of a major-minor, this scale heard in isolation seems as though straining in its ascent. At slow tempo, music based on seems to meander, a peculiarity that

² From a variety of pentatonic scales are the following (transposed to A for ease of comparison). European: A, B-flat, C-sharp, D, E, G 2; Japanese: A, B-flat, D, E, F; Hirajoshi: A, B, C, E, F; Pelog: A, B-flat, C, E, F; Kumoi: A, B, C, E, F-sharp.

Debussy applied to searching effect in the opening passage of his prelude ‘Afternoon of a Faun’ (1892-94).

Containing tritones, A-D-sharp, C-sharp-G, F-B, these and other dissonances can give rise to jagged melodies and discords. Such is Ex. 74.1. Nipping from pillar to post, its bantering counterpoints teeter between two tonal pinpoints, G and A. Though neither really registers as a tonality G is stabilized for a mite in the last bar shown though its octave and triadic association of G-B.³

Ex. 74.1. L. Bosman: *A portrait of two scallywags* (1983)



³ For the whole-tone scale see also Smith Brindle’s *Guitarcosmos I* (1979), ‘Berceuse’ and ‘Whole-Tones in Octaves’.

75. Serialism.

An ordering of atonality

Venturing from known ground into expanses of total freedom is a daunting prospect. Each next step entails yet another decision. But still is that lure of exploration, beyond the familiar into uncharted terrains. And the urge for discovery is more compelling be it at a time of relentless musical experimentation. Those composers so inclined inevitably undertook these challenges in different ways. For some, by measured paces were advances sized-out. While they edged progressively ahead, others leapt headlong with revolutionary conceptions. Either way, for these visionaries, compositional practices of the past had pretty much run their course; fresh departures beckoned. The dissipation of tonality in the late 19th century, and the rampant chromaticism in the air left future pursuits open to reassessment and invention. One option was to harness atonality and organize it systematically though still individually. Just as scales served as premises for composition, so too could a preconceived ordering of pitches be drawn from the twelve-tone chromatic compass. Unlike scales, though, these newly-devised permutations weren't intended for general circulation; they were formulated for perhaps no more than one envisaged composition.

Once determined, this 'series' ordering of the twelve-note chromatic, otherwise called a 'tone row', would unwind or unfurl over and again throughout the course of the composition. In one guise then another, it rotates note-by-note or with its components splayed. As the music's concealed motivator, the series could be dispensed melodically, strung into counterpoints and vertically aligned as chords. Whatever, all twelve components are kept rotationally in play. Even so, pervasive though the series is within the composition, it doesn't prescribe the music's shaping nor dictate its passage of events. More apparent to the eye than the ear in many cases, the series need not be perceptible to the listener to deepen their appreciation of the music stemming from it – indeed it's no more relevant to comprehending a serial-based composition than knowing which particular scale underlies a traditional working.

Composing with a predetermined twelve-tone note chromatic series is known as 'serialism' or 'dodecaphony'⁴ Since its inception in the early 20th century, serialism took widespread hold as a virile stimulus in the musical breakthroughs of the 1950s, Within the guitar repertoire, Ex. 75.1 presents in this case a simplistic running.

Ex. 75.1. R. Smith Brindle: *Simple Serial Melody* (from Webern's Op 17) (1976)

Andante

numbering
editorial

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

Play

⁴ 'Dodecaphony', twelve-tone, and in America, 'twelve-tone composition' also denotes serial music. Strictly speaking these three terms should be reserved for music written in free twelve-tone chromaticism without a serial organisation. However they have become synonymous with serialism. Where serialism is not involved it is customary to refer to 'free' twelve-tone music. Observed by Smith Brindle 1982, 4. Perle states that dodecaphony and its equivalent, twelve-tone music, is applied in its customary sense, as referring to twelve-tone serial composition. Perle, *Serial Composition and Atonality*, 1981, 8.

76. Preludes, Studies and Suites

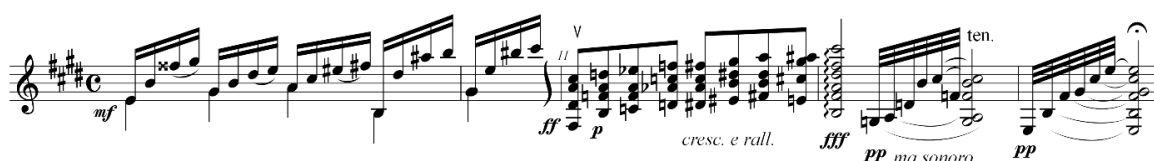
Around the centre-pieces of recent guitar music, a profusion of mixed varieties has sprung up. As collections of preludes, studies and sundries, they come in all proportions and with as many components. Where formerly they stemmed from major-minor scales, later yields embody the musical tender of recent times. Spanning the fingerboard progressively cross-keyed harmonies come within reach, quartal chords, dissonant relishes and shifting tonalities. And where vintage offerings adhered pretty much to binary and ternary margins, those nowadays range with novel turns of melody and unexpected changes of tack.

Miniatures of today also appeal for their depictive slants. Alluding to a particular subject or narrative they simulate actions, happenings and gestures. Should the composition in view be a homage to a composer, it might bear traces of the musical thumbprints of its noted dedicatee. There are those too in a Romantic vein, others neo-Classical and others still bristling. Cross-fusions arise, with snatches from the past, snippets from popular music, filters of jazz and blues licks. In their proliferation they offer the enquiring guitarist limitless variety.

Preludes

From earlier years of the century, Miguel Llobet's name again figures, now for his charming preludes. From some seconds long to a minute or two, among them is *Prelude-Original*, Ex. 76.1. Beginning with recurring figures in the old manner, it nonetheless harbours surprises. Accruing chromatics underway, subsequent arpeggiations become increasingly obscure. These with extended chords and dissonant campañellas within just the first line alone certainly cast this prelude in a later light.

Ex. 76.1. M. Llobet: *Prelude-Original* (c.1912)



77. Modern Variations for Guitar

On traditional footings still or more capricious of late, variations continue to exercise their lure – of letting the imagination loose on a chosen idea. Those keeping to established grooves pose as ever the age-old challenge of wringing much from little. Ostinatos still come into play, melodies from yesteryear and received themes endure as motivators. Though for many other settings nowadays, tried and trusted approaches are discarded. Fantasies in all but name, a first-found thought can now serve merely to prompt any number of free-wheeling crossings. Earmarked at the outset, the theme, if it amounts to one, thereon dissipates leaving but trace elements and fragmentary after-images. Amid roving linework, it remains for the listener to pick up its scent.

Either way, as spin-offs from themes in the old manner or open-ranging, variations have increasingly extended their reaches through the compositional dividends of recent times. Infused with chromaticism, melodies have become ever more inflected and sinuous. Triads endure healthily as kernels for extended harmonies; and given the musical pluralism abroad today, snatches from the classics, popular traits and those from elsewhere may well filter through or rear up blatantly. Tone rows too serve as spurs. Besides which even singular motifs germinated by replication, elaboration and transformation make for continuously transforming variations.

Homing in first on age-old approaches, passacaglias rooted in ostinatos continue to rotate. From the wider musical domain an early 20th century landmark is Webern's *Passacaglia for Orchestra* Op. 1 (1908) in which an eight-bar pizzicato theme is the subject. Ostinatos also sidle through the neo-Classical reworkings of Stravinsky, and have left their imprint in Britten's oeuvre. Traditional themes too, the folia, have been given fresh finishes. As a monument of the modern repertoire for guitar is Manuel Ponce's *Variaciones y Fuga sobre el tema de Folia de España* (1929). Rather than rounds of paraphrases, its twenty-one cycles are more of a series of stylistic vistas. Animated at one turn, dolorous another, the folia introduced as Ex. 77.1 is transmuted by turns into dancelike episodes, lyrical refrains and flamboyant outbursts.

Ex. 77.1. M.M. Ponce: *Variations sur 'Folia de España' et Fugue* (1929)

The musical score is written on a single staff in treble clef, 3/4 time, with a tempo marking of 'Lento'. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The notation consists of a sequence of chords and short melodic lines. Below the staff, Roman numerals indicate the harmonic progression: Im, V, Im, VII, III, VII, Im, V. The score includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *p* and *f*.



78. Sonatas from Later Days

Leafing through a catalogue of recent guitar music, certain items listed there are likely to catch the eye. With evocative titles, by their names alone images spring to mind of a declared scenario, action or event. But no such imagining is aroused of a composition within this batch that happens to bear the name ‘sonata’. Nondescript but mindful of previous encounters with this designation, there’s every likelihood that it will be music of some dimensions – that is, of several pages and movements. As ever the title admits a *mélange* of themes, incidental tracts and oblique excursions. Whether recent sonatas stem from diatonic premises as some still do, or forging their own paths, their room for manoeuvre has widened immeasurably through later resources. In the absence of tonic-dominant interpolations and expositions of themes in the old manner, the stimulants for them can now be just a snatch of melody or figure. Without perhaps making an impression at the outset, one or more of these animators nevertheless register subsequently singularly or in combinations, complementing each another or thrust in opposition.

Yet still, time-honoured sonata procedures have endured. Composers opting for traditional approaches, notably those with national sentiments perpetuated them. Within and beyond diatonic margins, traditional workings are detectable in the presentation of themes, developments and returns (see Vol. 4, Chapter 62). Federico Moreno Torroba’s sonata is one such if compacted as a sonatina.

Ex. 78.1. F. Moreno Torroba: *Sonatina* (1924)



Play ►

79. Outreaches.

New projections

Within the turnovers of recent music for guitar, certain earlier-mentioned compositions have taken their place as emblems. They endure as landmarks of the guitar's extended traditions and progressive strides. Side by side with these are others that linger at the fringes. Oblique limbs of contemporary music they range from easy on the ear to wincing. Of those in a neo-Romantic vein, discernible themes are nourished by later harmonies. There are breakaways too, contoured yet out on a limb. Then extremities, uncompromising in complexity. In capsules all their own, it seems as if they were dictated by the head rather than guided by the heart. Shed of sentimental attachments, devoid of apparent allegiances, they abide as one-off explorations.

As the first departure here from traditional groves is a composition released in 1924 by the French composer Georges Migot, *Pour un hommage à Claude Debussy*. Beginning with an unmeasured prelude this could indeed be likened to the meanders of Debussy's keyboard.

Ex. 79.1. G. Migot: *Pour un hommage à Claude Debussy* (1924)

The musical score is presented in three systems. The first system starts with the word 'Librement' and dynamic markings 'ff' and 'p'. The second system includes 'm.d.' and 'p.2.7.'. The third system includes 'p.2.10.' and 'etc.'. The score features various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings.



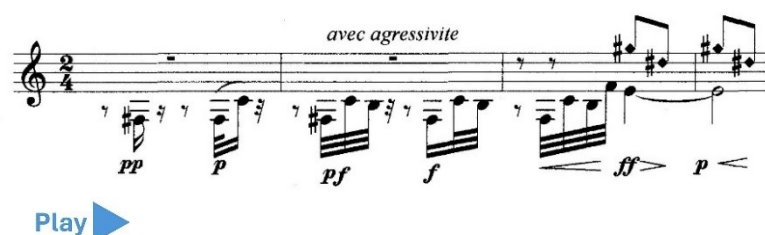
80. Contemporary Sound Sources and Special Effects for Guitar

A plaintive harmonic signifying the distant toll of a bell, a sombre bass drone marking the passing of time. A fanfare of shrill repeated notes simulating a martial rallying call, a warped dissonance giving tone to anguish. Such are the telling sound effects from the guitar nowadays to enhance musical depictions. To these resources, unimagined acoustic effects have been added to the instrument's tonal palette. For illustrative purposes as well we detect in the repertoire, hints of onomatopoeia and exoticisms harking of faraway places; trills echo the calls of Amazonian birds, soundboard taps, the patter of forest rain. To evoke a Russian dance are tremolo chord swishes likened to a balalaika. And from a combination of implements at hand, spoons, tuning forks, are jangles as if from a Javanese gamelan.

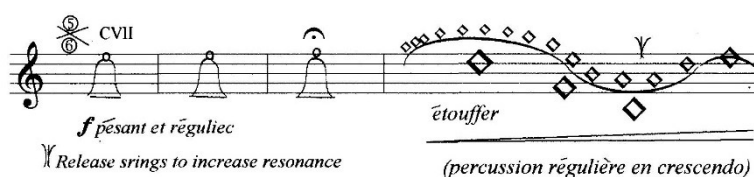
Then again, without connotations, vibrant, jarring, fuzzy and muted timbres and sonorities have been mustered at the fingerboard and since given rise to unique tangents of guitar music. Whatever melodies are detected within them might well be incidental to what are now predominately constellations of tone colours. Wrested from the guitar of late these special effects are so extraordinary that an unknowing listener would never suspect they were unleashed from six strings. What could be described as sonic mosaics with diagonal shots and superimposed layers of sound, blending, recoiling, piercing or barely audible, their differing densities and dispositions impart spatial and cross-cutting dimensions to the music. Peculiar to the guitar, compositions hewn from such abnormal timbres have added new strengths to its contemporary repertoire.

Ex. 80.1. F. Kleynjans: *A l'Aube du Dernier Jour*, Op. 33 (1980)

1. 'Attente, très mécanique



2. 'A l'Aube'



Pl. 80.1. Bell symbols indicate crossed strings struck at the 7th fret. Diamond heads are sounded by laying the fourth left hand finger lightly on the upper strings at the 4th fret.

81. Singers, the Guitar and Ensembles

Edging their way through huddled diners, two performers take their place on a small rounded stage. Lights dim, the chatter subsides, waiters sidle noiselessly. Eyes converge on one of the two standing at centre there angling a flute. Fingers poised, a sideways glance then lights on a seated guitarist. Tilted slightly forward from his chair, hands at the ready, are gestures calculated to ensure hush and charge expectancy. Striking up, the flautist sounds out with swoops, dives and flutters. Such is the breeziness of this passage its delivery could well be one of spontaneous inspiration. As if on whim too, the guitarist pitches in with syncopated chordwork and melodic asides. By the drift of this duet, with its ballad-like refrains and jazz-tinted harmony, it harks of a vintage cabaret number. Yet there is a certain air of elegance to it that befits the delectation of well-healed society, habitués of metropolitan nocturnal haunts. Impressions as these would not be far off the mark, as the titles of this particular music bear out. For doubtless they were the Parisian dives frequented by tango-extraordinaire, Astor Piazzolla when he penned 'Café 1930' and 'Nightclub 1960'.

Backtracking in time, the guitar was thrust into the vanguard of 20th century music with strings, brass and woodwind for Anton Webern's 'Five Pieces for Orchestra' (1925). A pointillist work, its instrumentation bristles with jabs and melodic slithers from a clarinet, horn, trumpet, harp and celesta. Biding time until the third movement the guitar then cuts in. Contributing unique tone colours and special effects the guitar holds its own against percussion, woodwind, strings. Its clipped tones, mercurial runs and tremolos are also to be heard in various gatherings of mandolins, celesta, marimba, the vibraphone and more of this time.

In the years since Webern's orchestration, guitarists have secured a niche and sometimes pride of place in a staggering number of participations. So vast this area of the guitar's engagements it exceeds the limits of these pages. If by reference only and glimpse here and there, we can gain an inkling of its widespread participations with singers and mixed ensembles of late.

Singers and guitarists

No longer contained to diatonic premises or strophic rounds of verse, vocalists now are ever more detached from their accompaniments. Free to wend, to sustain at will, a singer blends at times with the harmony but more so angles obliquely. For their part guitarists respond in synchronization with vocalists while contributing individual commentaries to deliveries. At poignant moments the guitarist lends delicate touches, a distant harmonic, a fluttering line, a plaintive touch. To vocal outbursts, exclamations from the guitar heightens the drama with intensive build-ups, incisive chords, staccato attacks.

82. Reflections on Recent Music for Guitar

Their timespans apart, the phases of the guitar's repertoire across the breadth of its history can be broadly distinguished by the sounds and traits of their age. There is to each epoch a certain ring to its music, a characteristic shaping of line, a chordal tender. These facets smack of an era, of the Renaissance, Baroque, the Classical age. Ahead to modern times however whatever musical strains and elements linger from the past are now dispersed within a sonic welter of those from the present. That said, certain approaches, applications and components of late have settled in place and been codified in the annals of contemporary music.

Overviewing the guitar's resurgence during the course of the 20th century, the breadth of its music has surely proved to be its most prolific. From players themselves and composers elsewhere its repertoire has kept pace with reaches from the broad domain. Within its sweep now are national traits, musical strains from distant lands, cross-fusions, 'isms and countless singular breakaways.

Given the multiplicity of trends abroad in the 20th century there are now no standard harmonies, no diatonic boundaries, no period-stamped shaping of line. Absorbing this accumulation of resources, the first to hand were extended harmonies within such as the miniatures of Llobet, Ex. 73.2. Extended and parallel progressions were then to make a mark with Villa-Lobos, Ex. 73.3. As a relief from omnipresent triads, quartal chords took hold, Ex. 73.7. Another rich reserve and one peculiar to the guitar, its open- and stopped-string harmonies, Ex. 73.11. Add to these boundless self-conceived chords and progressions lingering, gone without trace and awaiting discovery, Ex. 73.10.

Leafing back to the early decades of the 20th century and traditional workings with depictive slants were the Spanish evocations of Moreno Torroba and Turina. Enlargements on inherited procedures from further afield are Ponce's sonata, Ex. 78.2 from 1927, and Lauro's waltzes Ex. 72.3.



Pl. 82.1. *Petite fille à la guitare*. Marie Laurencin (1883–1956) French painter and printmaker. A prominent figure in the Parisian avant-garde as a member of the Cubists. Bibliothèque Nationale de France.