

Abstracts and Contributors

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Just a Spanish Spectral Story? On Transnational Cultural Transfers at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century

Since the turn of the twentieth century, Spain has experienced a significant flow of intellectual, ideological, and aesthetic values coming from France and in quest of an imaginary musical modernity. Is such transnational logic sufficient for explaining the Spanish composers' reception of French spectralism at the turn of the twenty-first century, and the way they have adapted its technical achievements for their own practices? We answer this question focusing on three Spanish authors who have approached spectral techniques or attitudes in quite dissimilar ways: José Manuel López, Mauricio Sotelo, and Alberto Posadas. For that purpose, we provide analytical arguments around their oeuvre, their biographical track record, and the surrounding context. In particular, our musical analyses provide diverse genetic clues about their respective creative processes. Evidence lends us to widen the aforementioned—and often clichéd—transnational flow, epitomizing several complexities—and also paradoxes—of Spanish contemporary art music when considered in relation to the current international milieu.

Keywords: Spectral music; Transnational cultural transfers; José Manuel López; Mauricio Sotelo; Alberto Posadas

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Apart from his BA in both art history and music, Pedro Ordóñez Eslava (pittpoe@gmail.com) qualified to become a guitar teacher in Seville and holds a PhD in musicology from the University of Granada. As a musicologist, he has always worked on the connections between music, arts, and poetry in twenty-first-century creation. Among his interests are new music and arts education, contemporary flamenco, and sound art. He has been working and living, for shorter or longer periods, in Granada, Strasbourg, Berlin, and Paris. He is currently working in the Department of Musicology at the University of Granada.

Ryan Ross

“Blaspheming Beethoven?”: The Altered BACH Motive in Vaughan Williams’s Fourth Symphony

Vaughan Williams’s Fourth Symphony (1934) has elicited much discussion regarding its aesthetic nature and sources of inspiration. Early critics associated the work’s dissonances with a concession to continental European musical modernism, or with a depiction of the political tensions of 1930s Europe. More recent commentaries have noted its references to Beethoven, one of which the composer admitted to in print. These commentators have argued either that these references constitute a continuation of the Beethovenian tradition in the twentieth century, or that they present a critique of the German composer. This essay adds a new argument in favor of the latter position. First, it examines Vaughan Williams’s writings, which reveal respect for Beethoven’s stature, sharp antipathy toward his aesthetic, and a tendency to negatively measure him against Johann Sebastian Bach. Next, it considers one of the main recurring motives of Vaughan Williams’s Fourth Symphony, a slightly altered musical BACH cipher, through the lens of these writings. It concludes that the use and placement of this motive at the points in the Fourth Symphony which most strongly recall Beethoven are intentionally mischievous, and echo musically Vaughan Williams’s Bach-aided digs at Beethoven in prose.

Keywords: Vaughan Williams; Beethoven; Symphony; Reception; Analysis

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Assaf Shelleg

Josef Tal on the Cusp of Israeli Statehood, or, The Simultaneity of Adjacency and Oppositionality

Discussing Josef Tal’s works during the transition into Israeli statehood, the article uncovers the ways the art music in Palestine/Israel duplicated the Zionist allegory and conditioned the studies that followed them. While it was fairly easy to “otherize” Tal’s penchant for post-tonal designs and nonrepresentational aesthetic in a cultural constellation that prioritized the (euphonic) immediacy of national signifiers, his works embody both the internalization of national constructs and their destabilization. Contextualizing this simultaneity is the wider discussion of the gap between national rhetoric and the manufacturing of cultural hybrids, as well as the historiographical paradigms that have shaped the field of art music in Israel. With

these key variables in mind Tal's music can be reconsidered alongside the disillusionment with romanticist Zionism in modern Hebrew poetry already during the interregnum of statehood and in the way political dates have punctuated a cultural history that precedes and traverses 1948.

Keywords: Israel; Post-tonal music; Josef Tal; Jewish music; Musical exoticism

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Boris von Haken

The Einsatzstab Rosenberg and the Seizure of Musical Cultural Property in Western Europe during the Second World War

In 1940, after the defeat of France by German military forces, both state and party agencies in the Third Reich established large-scale programs for the appropriation and theft of documents and artworks of presumed German origins from the occupied territories. For music scholars the search for such materials was handed over to the "Sonderstab Musik" (special commission for music), headed by Herbert Gerigk of the "Amt Rosenberg" (Rosenberg office). Musicologists working for the special commission, therefore, were simultaneously documenting German musical sources in the libraries and archives of the occupied territories, in many cases also participating in the theft of Jewish property.

Keywords: World War II; German occupation; Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg; Musical manuscripts

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