

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance

The neoclassical movement in France influenced a new group of composers from a neighboring country whose classical musical scene had been exhausted and overplayed. The Spanish composers of the early twentieth century were looking for new and fresh ideas to include in their musical works. Although some Spanish composers had great success composing in late Romantic and impressionist styles, French neoclassicism was the new idea Spanish composers needed in order to propel their compositions into significant status. Prior to the influence of French neoclassicism, the musical scene in Spain was made up mainly of a Spanish folk music revival, which was comprised of the resurgence of flamenco and the cultivation of the *zarzuela*.

Two composers who developed Spanish folk music into highly regarded musical works were Isaac Albéniz (1860-1909) and Enrique Granados (1867-1916). Both composers were influential at the beginning of nineteenth-century Spanish nationalism. Spanish compositions during this time had folk elements and nationalistic tendencies; however, in order to produce a new, more exalted style of work, a non-Spanish style of international significance would be necessary. Spanish composers would only benefit from incorporating a current musical trend that was admired and emulated, even if that trend was not Spanish. That trend would be neoclassicism; and, fortunately for the Spanish, neoclassicism does not refer to any specific culture, but rather it may be incorporated by any culture, assimilated, and appropriated by that culture. This would be the impetus for the new style known as *casticismo*.¹

The composers associated with *casticismo* are, among others, Manuel de Falla (1876-1946), Joaquín Turina (1882-1949), and Conrado del Campo (1878-1953), the first two being the most famous of their time. Named after a literary group that flourished

¹ See Chapter 3 for full discussion of *casticismo* and *neocasticismo*.

around the turn of the century, these composers were known as the *Generación del '98* (Generation of 1898). Falla and Turina studied in France and were exposed to and influenced by the great French composers of the impressionist and neoclassical styles. This group, in turn, influenced other composers who came together to create their own groups in the late 1920s.

There were at least two important and influential groups that arose in the late 1920s. Although both groups belong to the *Generación del '27* (Generation of 1927) and they were both known as the *Grupo de los Ocho* (Group of Eight), the two were quite different in musical aesthetics and philosophy. The region in Spain in which they flourished distinguishes the two groups. The first group gathered in Madrid and was referred to as the *Grupo de Madrid* (Group of Madrid); the second group flourished in Catalonia and was simply known as *Grupo de los Ocho*.

Because of the type of compositions he produced and the time in which he was an active composer, Joaquín Rodrigo (1901-1999) belonged to the group known as Generation of '27. Rodrigo was heavily influenced by French neoclassicism and *casticismo*. However, because of his longevity, Rodrigo also belonged to another group of composers who, along with Rodrigo, began a new movement later known as *neocasticismo*. This new movement began during and developed after the Spanish Civil War (1936-39).

The political turmoil in Spain during the 1920s and 1930s proved to be significant in defining composers' cultural values, and, consequently, *casticismo* took on an added meaning. While it still maintained a love and practice of traditional customs, *neocasticismo* was presented as a restoration movement. Like the early French neoclassical composers, such as Debussy, Ravel, and others, the Spanish composers looked to the past for inspiration.

The composers who desired to revive Spanish neoclassicism admired the culture that the eighteenth-century *zarzuela* represented. According to Marco, this culture included “aristocracy, *majeza* [nobility from eighteenth-century Madrid], bullfights,

saraos, and guitar playing.”² The Spanish public, many of whom were only generally aware of their country’s rich history, identified the music as Spanish and appropriated the music as their own. The public pinpointed what made these compositions rightfully Spanish. These Spanish elements included regional Spanish dances and rhythms, phrygian melodies and harmonies, zarzuela plots that incorporate Spanish contexts, and flamenco singing and dancing, as well as flamenco-style guitar performance. With the incorporation of these elements in composition and the approval of the Spanish public, success was, therefore, inevitable. This new style was a combination of neoclassicism and nationalism, which Marco labeled *neocasticismo*, as “a kind of nationalism that tends to develop the aspects of popular urban or historicist picturesque or local color, or sometimes evokes an eighteenth-century atmosphere.”³ With many other Spanish composers who wrote in that style, Joaquín Rodrigo stood out as the leader of *neocasticismo*.⁴ Within that new style, his musicological research provided the major musical influences, tools, and resources in Rodrigo’s works, specifically in his guitar concertos. This research included sixteenth-century madrigals and *diferencias*, *vihuela* and early guitar music, and the eighteenth-century concerto.

With a persuasive recommendation from Falla and the receipt of the *Conde de Cartagena* scholarship, Rodrigo studied musicology at the Sorbonne in 1935. It was during this time at the Sorbonne, at the suggestion of music professor and friend Aurelio Viñas, that Rodrigo wrote his unpublished research paper titled “La Vihuela y los Vihuelistas en el Siglo XVI” (The *vihuela* and vihuelists in the sixteenth century).⁵ This paper focuses on the importance of the *vihuela da mano* and the vihuelist composers of the sixteenth century. Furthermore, the paper was presented at the Sorbonne in the spring of 1936 as part of the 400th anniversary celebration of the publication of Luis Milan’s *El Maestro*.

The ideas expressed in Rodrigo’s paper contributed to the growing musicological

² Marco, p. 129. *Saraos* are soirées or evening festivities and dances.

³ Marco, p. 242, footnote 10.

⁴ See Chapter 3 for a list of composers who composed in the style of *neocasticismo*.

⁵ Victoria Kamhi de Rodrigo, *Hand in Hand with Joaquín Rodrigo: My life at the Maestro's side*, translated by Ellen Wilkerson (Pittsburgh: Latin American Literary Review Press, 1992), p. 91.

studies of Spanish music by Spaniards. Additionally, these musicological studies proved to be influential in most of his guitar music, including solo works and those scored with orchestra. His two famous compositions for guitar and orchestra, *Concierto de Aranjuez* (1939) and *Fantasia para un Gentilhombre* (1954), proved to be representative compositions in the style of *neocasticismo*.⁶ The former is representative of an eighteenth-century, sonata style concerto; the latter refers to the works of the seventeenth-century guitar composer, Gaspar Sanz (1640-1710). Most of Rodrigo's solo guitar works since his first, *Zarabanda Lejana* (1926), also refer or allude to Spain's musical and cultural past. In continuing his musicological studies, Rodrigo maintained his focus in guitar research even after his *vihuela* paper.

In a 1961 article entitled "El Vuelo Actual de la Guitarra" (The flight of the guitar), Rodrigo reinforced his interest in musicological studies of the guitar twenty-five years after his *vihuela* paper.⁷ Rodrigo commented in this article on how the status of the guitar rose from a flamenco instrument to a concert instrument. He also observed the importance of the history of the instrument, naming important composers and musicians who helped raise concert guitar performance to a respectable status. Both articles serve as bookends to his lifelong service to Spanish musicology and guitar composition.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this thesis is to illustrate how Joaquín Rodrigo's interest in musicology influenced what and how he composed for guitar. In addition, it shows how Rodrigo contributed to Spanish musicology by revealing the importance of sixteenth-century vihuelist composers. This research elucidates the importance of Rodrigo's guitar compositions within a musicological and historical context.

Another important aspect of this research shows the consistency of his interests in the history of the *vihuela* and the guitar. Both articles serve as end points between which his guitar compositions function as a means rightly justified by those ends. His guitar

⁶ Rodrigo's *Concierto Madrigal* for two guitars and orchestra (1966) is not as famous as the two aforementioned concertos, however, it may be considered as a representative work of *neocasticismo*, since it includes variations on a Renaissance madrigal. See Chapter 5 for further analysis of this concerto.

⁷ Joaquín Rodrigo, "El vuelo actual de la guitarra," in *Ya* (July 9, 1961).

compositions concretize his ideas of the importance of studying and evaluating past composers and compositions. His works are a concrete presentation of his interests as a musicologist.

Finally this research essentially shows how Rodrigo combined his musicological studies and interests along with his knowledge of composition to create guitar works that led him to worldwide fame and popularity. Some of the more famous, namely *Concierto de Aranjuez*, *Fantasia para un Gentilhombre*, and *Tres Piezas Españolas* (1954), are performed frequently by professional guitarists. In some cases Rodrigo fulfilled commissions for guitar compositions written for specific performers. Some artists have asked for Rodrigo to transcribe some of his guitar concertos for other instruments--e.g., for Nicanor Zabaleta in 1974, Rodrigo transcribed the *Concierto de Aranjuez* for harp, and for James Galway in 1978, the *Fantasia para un Gentilhombre* for flute.

Method of the research

The methodologies used for this research consist of a translation and analysis of Joaquín Rodrigo's "La Vihuela y los Vihuelistas en el Siglo XVI."

A narrative about the conception and development of neoclassicism in France and Germany provides background information on the growth of *casticismo*. A brief account of *casticismo* and the cultivation of Spanish musicology paints a backdrop to the conception of *neocasticismo*. Furthermore, a concise synopsis of the socio-political situation in Spain during the first forty years of the twentieth century offers a picture of the political environment in which Spanish artists lived. This information is important because it shows how the unstable political climate troubled some artists and even threatened and suppressed artistic freedom.

Score analyses of representative works for guitar and orchestra are provided. The score analyses demonstrate how Rodrigo's ideas and thoughts about Spanish musicology, specifically guitar research, are realized in his compositions. The analyses establish how Rodrigo, in a sense, paid homage to past musicians and their music by referring to, alluding to, or quoting their cultural and musical values in his guitar compositions.

Survey of Existing Literature

The literature considered for this research consists of the following: 1.) Joaquín Rodrigo's "La Vihuela y los Vihuelistas en el Siglo XVI" and "El Vuelo Actual de la Guitarra," 2.) sources that deal mainly with neoclassicism in France and Germany, 3.) sources that are concerned with neoclassicism in Spain, *neocasticismo*, Spanish musicology, and the socio-political and socio-historical situation in Spain, 4.) scores and recordings of Rodrigo's guitar works for solo guitar and for guitar and orchestra, and 5.) writings about Rodrigo's life and music education.

Joaquín Rodrigo's daughter, Cecilia Rodrigo, founder and president of Ediciones Joaquín Rodrigo, has provided the two articles written by the composer. Furthermore, all other texts and articles concerning the composer's biography, recordings, and scores related to this research were provided by Ediciones Joaquín Rodrigo. Frequent communication with the associates of Ediciones Joaquín Rodrigo through electronic mail and telephonic communication have provided access to the latest literature and information pertinent to this research.

There is an abundance of sources that provide significant information concerning the beginning of neoclassicism, as well as its peripheral influences. Scott Messing's *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept through the Schoenberg / Stravinsky Polemic* provides accurate and in-depth information about neoclassicism.⁸ The text focuses on the conception of French and German neoclassicism, and also includes information about Igor Stravinsky's neoclassical phase. Messing's article "Polemic as History: The Case of Neoclassicism" also offers a more detailed view of French neoclassicism.⁹ Arnold Whittall's article titled "Neoclassicism" supplies a general overview of neoclassicism.¹⁰ Martha M. Hyde's "Neoclassical and Anachronistic Impulses in Twentieth-Century Music" observes Stravinsky's neoclassical phase, which

⁸ Scott Messing, *Neoclassicism in Music: From the Genesis of the Concept through the Schoenberg / Stravinsky Polemic* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1988).

⁹ Scott Messing, "Polemic as History: The Case of Neoclassicism," *Journal of Musicology* 4/9 (1991).

¹⁰ Arnold Whittall, "Neoclassicism," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians II*, edited by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), xvii, 753-55.

began in the early 1920s.¹¹ Hyde provides several arguments as to why Stravinsky's works in the 1920s properly corresponds to the French neoclassicist ideal of the early twentieth century.

Tomás Marco's *Spanish Music in the Twentieth Century* offers in-depth information about the growth of classical music in Spain. Marco traces the development of twentieth-century Spanish music from its early influences of French neoclassicism to the creation and maturation of *casticismo* and *neocasticismo*. Marco also provides accurate information on the many different genres of music that rose to popularity during the first half of the twentieth century. Carol Hess's *Manuel de Falla and Modernism in Spain* offers much information about Manuel de Falla, his influences, and how he influenced later Spanish composers including Joaquín Rodrigo.¹² Many articles found in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians II* concerning individual twentieth-century Spanish composers provide information on how these artists contributed to Spanish music and musicology.¹³

Among the many important resources for biographical information is Vicente Vayá Pla's *Joaquín Rodrigo: su vida y su obra*.¹⁴ This text contains the most detailed account of his life as stated directly from the composer to the biographer from his birth to 1977. Another useful text is Victoria Kamhi de Rodrigo's *Hand in Hand with Joaquín Rodrigo: My life at the Maestro's side*. Although the text is from Joaquín's wife's perspective, she stands as a reliable source of information for their years in Paris during his stay at the Sorbonne and other information regarding Rodrigo's life. Finally Antonio Iglesias's *Escritos de Joaquín Rodrigo: recopilación y comentarios* contains many letters written by Rodrigo, his family, his associates, performers, and other composers, among other important individuals, concerning composition, performance, and other matters.¹⁵ This text also contains copies and commentaries of other musicological articles

¹¹ Martha M. Hyde, "Neoclassic and anachronistic impulses in Twentieth-Century music," in *Music Theory Spectrum* 18 (1996): 200-35.

¹² Carol Hess, *Manuel de Falla and modernism in Spain, 1898-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

¹³ See bibliography for all articles consulted.

¹⁴ Vicente Vayá Pla, *Joaquín Rodrigo: su vida y su obra* (Madrid: Real Musical, 1977).

¹⁵ Antonio Iglesias, *Escritos de Joaquín Rodrigo: recopilación y comentarios*, (Madrid: Editorial

about which Rodrigo wrote and presented during academic discourses and conferences. These other studies show how Rodrigo's interests were focused on subjects other than the guitar.

All musical recordings are from *Edición Conmemorativa del Centenario de Joaquín Rodrigo: Grabaciones Históricas, I y II*, which consists of 23 compact discs, including performances by various artists.¹⁶ The CDs I/1, I/3, I/4, II/10, II/11, and II/12 contain recordings of all guitar works by Joaquín Rodrigo. All scores are either readily available or owned by the present author and are from a variety of publishing companies.

Alpuerto, S. A., 1999).

¹⁶ Joaquín Rodrigo, *Edición Conmemorativa del Centenario de Joaquín Rodrigo: Grabaciones Históricas, I y II*, 23 compact discs, various artists (España: EMI Odeon, S. A., 2002).