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It is entitled:
The 1976 Commissions of Homenaje a Pablo Casals:
Stylistic Influences and the Evolution of Spanish Musical Modernism

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The 1976 Commissions of *Homenaje a Pablo Casals*:
Stylistic Influences and the Evolution of Spanish Musical Modernism

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Abstract

This paper documents the stylistic influences manifest in the musical compositions commissioned in 1976 by the government of Spain in honor of the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Pablo Casals, and traces the development of modern Spanish musical styles alongside the larger cultural and political upheavals Spain experienced in the modern era. Brief biographical background is given of the composers in order to note their individual musical influences, with references to salient avant-garde approaches evident in their compositions. Readers will gain deeper insight into the cultural underpinnings and stylistic influences associated with the 1976 commissions, which collectively highlight the remarkable evolution of Spanish and Catalán musical styles across the 20th century.
To Assunta, AJ, Mom, and Dad:

*sine qua non*
# Table of Contents

List of Figures vi

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: Pablo Casals: Paying Homage 7

Chapter 2: Andalucismo – History and Development 10

Chapter 3: Modernizing Influences: Catalonia, Paris, and Beyond 15

Chapter 4: Older Generation of Composers – Music and Influences 17

- Joaquín Rodrigo, *Sonata a la breve* 17
- Xavier Montsalvatge, *Microrapsòdia* 21
- Federico Mompou, *El Pont* 24
- Joaquim Homs, *In Memoriam Pau Casals* 29

Chapter 5: Young Maestros – Music and Influences 35

- Leonardo Balada, *Tres Transparencias de un Preludio de Bach* 35
- Manuel Castillo, *Ricercare a Pau Casals* 41
- Carmelo Alonso Bernaola, *Tiempo, Música para un Centenario: Casals* 46

Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusion 51

Bibliography 53

Appendix I: Original Spanish text of composer commentaries 56
**List of Figures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rodrigo</td>
<td><em>Sonata a la breve</em>, movement I, mm. 15-19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rodrigo</td>
<td><em>Sonata a la breve</em>, movement II, mm. 49-53</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Montsalvatge</td>
<td><em>Microrapsòdia</em>, mm. 29-30 and 31</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Montsalvatge</td>
<td><em>Microrapsòdia</em>, mm. 130-133</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mompou</td>
<td><em>El Pont</em>, mm. 13-19</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Homs</td>
<td><em>In Memoriam Pau Casals</em>, mm. 1-8</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Homs</td>
<td><em>In Memoriam Pau Casals</em>, mm. 46 and 47-49</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Homs</td>
<td><em>In Memoriam Pau Casals</em>, mm. 145-148</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Balada</td>
<td><em>Tres Transparencias</em>, movement I, excerpt</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Balada</td>
<td><em>Tres Transparencias</em>, title page, excerpt</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Balada</td>
<td><em>Tres Transparencias</em>, movement II, excerpt</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Balada</td>
<td><em>Tres Transparencias</em>, movement III, mm. 30-31 and 32-33</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Castillo</td>
<td><em>Ricercare a Pau Casals</em>, excerpt</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Castillo</td>
<td><em>Ricercare a Pau Casals</em>, excerpt</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Bernaola</td>
<td><em>Tiempos</em>, preface, excerpt from list of symbols</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Bernaola</td>
<td><em>Tiempos</em>, excerpt</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

In this document I undertake a comparative study of stylistic influences evident in the set of musical works commissioned in 1976 by the Spanish Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia in honor of the centenary of the birth of Pablo Casals. As a group, these works represent both the highly individual, modern approach of composers writing music in the latter part of the 20th century as well as their collective Spanish and Catalán cultural roots. Joaquím Homs, Federico Mompou, Xavier Montsalvatge, and Joaquín Rodrigo were the senior composers of the group, while the “young maestros” consisted of Leonardo Balada, Manuel Castillo, and Carmelo Alonso Bernaola. All were born within 40 years of one another and raised in a country and culture that existed, for much of the 20th century, on the periphery of progressive Europe, defined by characteristic sounds and stereotypes.

Each composer, however, sought his own path, sometimes with inspiration from Catalán culture, often beyond Spanish borders. Their resulting individual styles – as reflected in the 1976 commissions – bespeak multiple modern influences, and collectively represent the opening and broadening of modern Spanish musical culture. Thus the pieces they created, differing greatly from the predominant Andalusian style earlier in the century, form a useful lens through which we may examine various interconnecting threads of stylistic influence and evolution: Casals’ Catalán heritage, the political turbulence of twentieth-century Spain, and the tension (not

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1 José Luis García del Busto, Carmelo Bernaola: La obra de un maestro (Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 2004), 152: “…dos generaciones: la de los mayores, representada por Joaquín Homs, Federico Mompou, Xavier Montsalvatge y Joaquín Rodrigo; y la de los ‘jóvenes maestros,’ representada por Leonardo Balada, Manuel Castillo, y Carmelo Bernaola.” Translation by the author. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are also by the present author.
limited to the Iberian Peninsula, of course) between progressivism and conservatism, as the art of musical composition underwent radical changes.

Regarding these changes, it has been argued that the “central paradigm shift in Spanish musical modernism is the transition from españolismo (Spanish-ism) to universalismo (universalism).” If this is indeed the case, how is it reflected in this collection of commissioned works? What modernist, “universal” influences does an examination reveal? And what “regionalisms” may have been displaced, or remain only as vestiges of (or tributes to) an earlier style? These are some of the questions that will guide this study of the threads of influence reflected in the 1976 pieces of homenaje (homage) and the prehistory that led to their creation.

Chapter 1 introduces the recipient of the 1976 tribute, Pablo Casals, including brief biographical data in order to establish the background and context of the commissions. Chapter 2 follows with a discussion of the most popular elements of Andalusian style – including syncopated rhythms, guitar accompaniment and effects, gypsy style, etc. – and the influence on the development of this style of Felipe Pedrell, the nationalist sentiment of the era, and especially the music of Manuel de Falla. Chapter 3 features a discussion of modernizing influences, including Catalonian culture and politics, the draw of Wagner opera, and the musicians and teachers of progressive Paris and beyond. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the music and influences of the older and younger generations, respectively, of the 1976 homage composers, and each of the seven commissioned pieces, noting especially the presence or influence of avant-garde elements. Also discussed is the influence of Casals and his Catalán heritage evident, for example, in the

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references made to the music of Bach, or to the folksong he made famous, El Cant dels Ocells. Further comparison is made of the influence of local folksongs and flamenco style in the music of Montsalvatge with more avant-garde approaches – such as the paucity of melody or complete lack of bar lines in the music of Balada and Bernaola, respectively – in order to demonstrate either the specific cultural roots of the music or the conscious abandonment of such. Also explored is the role that musicological research played in the lives of these composers, particularly Montsalvatge’s investigations of the habanera and Rodrigo’s studies at the Sorbonne, and what resulting stylistic influences might be heard in their music. Finally, chapter 6 concludes this study with a brief summary.

This comparative study of the 1976 homage pieces, and their stylistic antecedents, will reveal a Spain largely emerged from relative isolation, in which modernist styles are clearly evident, as a result of composers looking both inward – for example, to the fundamentally musical (especially vocal or choral) nature of Catalán culture or historical political independence of its people – and outward, to teachers, trends, and influences beyond Spanish borders.

Several general histories of the music of Spain have been written, one of the earliest being Gilbert Chase’s The Music of Spain. Though somewhat dated, as a broad survey its usefulness is mostly as an introduction to the “nouns” of Spanish music – people, places, genres, trends. The second edition, however, does have a supplementary chapter about Spanish music.

since 1941, including a short paragraph on Montsalvatge and a brief description of Mompou’s music. Ann Livermore’s more recent *A Short History of Spanish Music* is, ironically, generally more in-depth, and from her we learn more details about the life and influence of Manuel de Falla, particularly regarding the early currents of *universalismo* suggested by the latter’s meeting with Albéniz and Turina, and their agreement to write music that had clear national connections, but which also aimed for a broader audience.⁴

Tomás Marco’s *Música Española de vanguardia (Spanish Avant-Garde Music)* is useful for the specific connections and influences he cites for contemporary composers: for example, that the dodecaphonic influence on the works of Joaquim Homs comes directly from his association with Roberto Gerhard, and thus to Schoenberg and Webern.⁵ Marco’s *Spanish Music in the Twentieth Century*, in an English translation by Cola Franzen, is particularly useful for its detailed information on individual composers, and the broad movements or groupings to which they belonged, e.g. the “Generation of ‘27” or “Nationalism and Casticismo” or the “Generation of ‘51.” Carol Hess’s fine *Manuel de Falla and Modernism in Spain, 1898-1936* is a model of clear, cogent, historical writing, demonstrating an especially keen awareness of the importance of understanding a culture from within its original context.

Books about Casals are often chatty – especially slim, anecdotal volumes such as Julian Lloyd Webber’s *Song of the Birds* – but sometimes useful, as is Albert E. Kahn’s well known quasi-biography *Joys and Sorrows: Reflections by Pablo Casals*. It is memorable for the

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extensive note taking that led to the closest thing we have to an autobiography of Casals. Of interest here, among other things, is the maestro’s retelling of the story of his chance discovery of the manuscript of the Bach Solo Suites, the tremendous impact it had on him, and the fact that it took him twelve years to work up the courage to perform an entire Suite in concert.  

Books or articles about the *homenaje* composers have tended to be either in interview format, or as lists of compositions. A few, such as the comprehensive *Carmelo Bernaola: la obra de un Maestro* by Garcia del Busto, describe virtually the entire composer’s output, though only the most well-known works get more than a paragraph’s description. *Le jardin retrouvé*, by Wilfrid Mellers, mostly offers personal and historical background on Mompou and his piano music, while Clara Janés’ *Federico Mompou: Vida, textos, y documentos* contains an intriguing early photograph of the actual bridge said to have inspired the composer’s *El Pont*.

Dissertations and theses tend to be the most narrowly focused and potentially relevant to the general subject of Spanish music, and to the 1976 homage composers in particular. For example, some very good dissertations on the music of Mompou, such as those by Zalkind, Hamill and Ruiz de Gauna, discuss his style and influences, especially his piano music, since that is what he is remembered for most often – particularly *Musica Callada*. Ruiz de Gauna’s work also contains useful translations from both Spanish and Catalán sources. Richard Paine’s *Hispanic Traditions in Twentieth-Century Catalan Music, with Particular Reference to Gerhard, Mompou and Montsalvatge* offers helpful specific examples of stylistic influences from Catalán

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Other than the original, published autograph score of the 1976 commissions, no sources deal directly with the set of pieces under study. Only a few mention them in passing, usually as part of a larger inventory of repertoire, such as in Garcia del Busto’s Carmelo Bernaola, and A Cellist’s Companion: A Comprehensive Catalogue of Cello Literature, by Lambooij and Feves. This study, therefore, fills a gap in cello repertoire studies, and brings to light a distinctive group of compositions through examining their notable stylistic antecedents, along with the progressive influences each composer uniquely absorbed and expressed through his personal musical language. Additionally, each composer wrote a brief commentary about his contribution, providing rare and valuable first-person insight into each piece, and the thought process and compositional approach behind it. These commentaries are translated into English here for the first time in the hopes of facilitating a wider dissemination and deeper understanding of this unique set of musical works.
Chapter 1

Pablo Casals: Paying Homage

Pablo Casals, the inspiration for the 1976 commissions, was renowned the world over not only as a cellist and musician, but also as an artist of conscience: he was staunch and unflinching in upholding the political ideals – including freedom and justice – that he held dear. He was born on Dec. 29, 1876, in Vendrell (just outside Barcelona), in what is today the semi-autonomous region of Catalonia (or Catalunya) in Northern Spain, and the Catalán heritage and language he grew up with were facets of his personal identity that he retained proudly all his life. He studied piano, organ and violin before ever starting the cello. As a young performer, Casals consistently seemed to catch the eye of the wealthy or influential, who subsequently helped him in his education. Isaac Albéniz, for example, after hearing him play, gave his mother a letter of introduction to Queen Maria Cristina’s private secretary, the Count de Morphy – one of Spain’s most influential music patrons – which was in fact used for the young cellist’s benefit some years later. Following studies in Madrid and Brussels, he lived for a time in Paris where another benefactor held lively gatherings through which Casals met philosophers, politicians, writers, artists, and musicians, including Paderewski, Saint-Saëns, Ravel and Schoenberg. He eventually settled back in Barcelona, where he found employment as principal cellist at the Gran Teatro de Liceo. While there, Casals became friends with the monks of Montserrat, whose duties included preserving the religious and folk music of Catalonia. He spent many hours “visiting

7 Robert Baldock, Pablo Casals (Boston, Northeastern University Press, 1992), 34.
and discussing music” with them.\(^9\) The connections and relationships Casals formed with the new and the traditional, foreign and domestic, are reflected in the pieces written to honor his memory.

Despite having various teachers, Casals can be considered largely self-taught: his own fiercely independent nature along with the experiments he conceived of new technical approaches to the cello, pushed the level of cello playing to new heights. For example, in Casals’ day, it was commonplace for cellists to hold the bow arm stiff and close to the body. A common pedagogical approach of the time had students practicing with a book held between the right arm and the trunk of the body, to reinforce this unnatural position. Additionally, the fingering practice of the day was to slide or glissando on virtually every shift of the left-hand position, giving every melody a sliding, syrupy effect. Casals didn’t care much for either practice, and came up with new ways of playing that resulted in both a cleaner sound, and more fluid technique.\(^10\) Generations of cellists have benefitted from his work ethic, his willingness to try new things, and his personal and musical integrity.

Over the course of his career, Casals’ reputation naturally grew to the point of becoming recognized the world over, and he embarked on many international tours. Yet he was always profoundly affected by the political situation at home. Indeed, he was forced to flee for his own life during the Spanish Civil War, and spent the remainder of his days in exile from his homeland. Once he realized that other countries would allow General Franco’s fascist regime in

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10 Ibid., 25.
Spain to survive unchallenged, he began a self-imposed musical exile, refusing to perform in any country that recognized the Spanish dictator’s government.

Throughout his performing career, Casals made a regular practice of concluding his performances with his own arrangement of *El Cant dels Ocells (Song of the Birds)*, a Catalán folksong he helped to popularize. It is with this folksong that both Rodrigo and Montsalvatge chose to honor the memory of Casals. In doing so, they honor both his musical and Catalán heritage.
Chapter 2

Andalucismo – History and Development

In order to understand the cultural milieu into which all of the homenaje composers were born – and thus, the regional expectations for their music – it is useful to keep a few elements of Spanish political and musical history in mind. First, four facts from political history:

1. Catalonia was and is a smaller culture, regionally vulnerable, within a larger, dominant culture – only granted semi-autonomy by the Spanish government in 1979.
2. The humiliating defeat of the Spanish-American War (1898) – referred to afterwards as “the disaster” – pushed Spain into isolation and introspection.\(^{11}\)
3. The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) tore apart the country, caused massive suffering, and precipitated a “brain drain” (as wars are wont to do) of many of the country’s artists and intellectuals, extending the nation’s isolation from broader European influence.\(^{12}\)
4. The fascist dictatorship of Franco lasted until 1975, further prolonging Spain’s isolation

At the beginning of the twentieth century, according to Carol Hess, Spanish music was characterized by an “isolationist mentality that arose in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War….”\(^{13}\) What characterized the music of this period? The dominant style of the era is referred to as andalucismo (or Andalusian style), after the southernmost region of Spain. It is what today

\(^{11}\) Hess, 14.
\(^{13}\) Hess, 8.
might be termed the stereotyped “Spanish sound.”\textsuperscript{14} A number of background elements have contributed to the history and development of andalucismo, the most common musical characteristics of which include the “flamenco” gypsy scale, with its lowered 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 6\textsuperscript{th} degrees and augmented 2\textsuperscript{nd}; guitar-like effects (rasgueado [“strumming”], the use of open-strings), and syncopated rhythms. In addition, traditional forms, songs, dances, and instruments are often used or imitated to evoke this style, including guitars, castanets, cante flamenco, cante jondo (“deep song”), and “dance-songs” such as the jota, nana, polo, seguidilla and fandango.\textsuperscript{15} The guitar in particular, along with its predecessor the vihuela, has a long history in Spain and has become a “deeply rooted symbol of Spanish music and culture,” playing a dual role as the carrier of both rhythm and harmony.\textsuperscript{16}

Growing nationalist sentiments also influenced both research and composition. Toward the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the Spanish musicologist and composer Felipe Pedrell was working on the publication of collections of Spanish polyphony, keyboard works, and folk music and encouraged his students to re-create a Spanish nationalistic style of music. In 1891 Pedrell published his pamphlet Por Nuestra Música, arguing for the use of “Spanish music and folklore from prior centuries as a base for generating innovative compositions.”\textsuperscript{17} He subsequently spent

\textsuperscript{14} Hess, 3.
\textsuperscript{17} Jones, 120.
years researching and collecting indigenous music from various regions of Spain, finally publishing his Cancionero Popular Español in 1920.\textsuperscript{18}

Three of Pedrell’s most celebrated protégés – Albéniz, Granados, and Falla – became extremely successful at composing music that was highly evocative of local color and flavor.\textsuperscript{19} Some evidently thought they were a bit \textit{too} successful: the British critic Cecil Gray, writing in 1924, said of them: “Spanish national music has so far produced no Borodin or Mussorgsky, but three Rimsky-Korsakovs – which is three too many.”\textsuperscript{20} Albéniz and Granados, known equally as pianists as well as composers, each saw a single composition emerge, over time, as the most celebrated, representative work of their total output, and both pieces were influenced directly by Spanish culture. Albéniz composed his \textit{Iberia} to represent the various geographical regions of Spain and their characteristic sounds, while Granados’ \textit{Goyescas} was written as a reflection of the paintings of Goya, one of the most celebrated Spanish artists. According to Carol Ann Wolfe-Ralph, even the earliest piano pieces that brought Granados to international acclaim contained sonorities – and received titles – that clearly identified the composer and his music with his native place and culture:

… the \textit{Danzas españolas} (1892-1900)… were the first works for which Granados became internationally recognized, and several of the \textit{Danzas} were eventually orchestrated (by Joan Lamote de Grignon and Rafael Ferrer). \textit{Danza No. 5} is the most well-known and contains many Spanish trademarks: narrow melodic range,
repetition of short phrases and guitar effects. This dance received the title *Andaluza* when published separately during Granados’ lifetime.  

Manuel de Falla is regarded as one of the greatest Spanish composers, but also as a pivotal figure during a time of significant artistic transformation. Though his compositions fall into distinct categories of stylistic development, his most well known pieces remain, for example, the ever-popular dances from *El Amor Brujo*, *The Three Cornered Hat*, or the *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*, a set of seven short pieces based on specific forms of Spanish dance and folk music (including the jota, nana, and seguidilla). While his earlier works tended to sound “Spanish” in ways that listeners might expect, his later, more progressive pieces began to reflect the influence of the neoclassic currents of the time. Yet however widely Falla was admired, his compositions, especially the earlier ones, were not always well received, even among his own countrymen, suggesting that some Spanish critics, too, were tiring of the Andalusian stereotype. “In fact,” states Hess, “the rejection of ‘localist’ andalucismo in favor of ‘universalist’ neoclassicism (the latter, a term applied to the Harpsichord Concerto) was the foremost motivation behind musical modernism in Spain.” Hess further suggests that this shift has both musical and political underpinnings:

… both [Falla’s] career and the criticism of his music were to some degree determined by cultural defensiveness…. Spain, regarded as “peripheral” by Spaniards and non-Spaniards alike, provides a compelling backdrop for exploring constructions of nationalism and historical selfhood. As noted, the striving for universalism – of transcending the periphery – was an essential ingredient in the

22 According to Hess, “Falla’s andalucismo was often seen as inauthentic, if not radical, in Spain…” (emphasis in the original). Hess, 3.
23 Hess, 4.
Spanish dialect [sic] of neoclassicism and one of the more salient topics in Falla criticism during the 1920s and 1930s.24

The varying enthusiasm evident in the reception history of Falla’s works illuminates the changing attitudes and internal divisions prevalent during the first decades of twentieth-century Spain. That his works were alternately praised and scorned by Spanish critics and outsiders alike reveals much about the conflicting politics, individual bias and stylistic currents of the time:

… when we examine the ways in which universalism was received in Spain we again meet surprising reactions. Some of the same critics who attacked Falla’s depiction of the Spanish race in the folkloric and harmonically conventional Three-Cornered Hat praised the astringent dissonances of the “universalist” El retablo and Harpsichord Concerto as inherently Spanish, and Falla himself attacked the precepts of universalism during the Great War only to embrace them a decade later. These shifts in perception reflect the rapid pace of aesthetic change during the Silver Age and are only some of the many paradoxes in the musical history of this “peripheral” country confronting modernism.25

Falla himself sought a return to what he considered the true essence of the cante jondo style by discarding the excesses of what already seemed an overwrought form, as is evident in his instructions to participants in the 1922 cante jondo festival he helped to organize. Explaining that “…primitive Andalusian cante jondo is grave, hieratic, of sober vocal modulation,” Falla instructed the competitors that “preference would be given to those whose style was adjusted to the old practices of the classic cantaores, avoiding abusive flourishes and restoring to cante jondo that admirable sobriety which constituted one of its greatest beauties.”26

24 Hess, 6.
25 Ibid., 8.
26 Livermore, 166. See also Hess, 175.
Chapter 3

Modernizing Influences: Catalonia, Paris, and Beyond

With these background elements in mind, it is easier to understand the principal musical conflict that arose in the early part of the century – what Hess terms “wagnerismo [Wagnerism] vs. zarzuela.” The zarzuela was a type of comic operetta, firmly entrenched in Spain, which invariably dealt with homegrown, stock characters and themes (in which Falla, incidentally, only briefly indulged). Wagnerism tended to be promoted by more cosmopolitan thinkers with an outward-looking attitude, characterized by receptivity to European influence. Catalán musicians of the era, for example, were eager to translate and produce the latest creations from Bayreuth into the local language and the local theater. Zarzuela, on the other hand, symbolized a more inward-looking attitude, a primary manifestation of españolismo, or an undue emphasis on reliving glories of the past. That these influences are as much political as musical is borne out by the regional nature of the genre: according to Hess, “[In Barcelona], the ‘music of the future’ was seen as liberation from zarzuela, a genre strongly associated with Madrid and whose central authority many Cataláns sought to undermine.”

Even among Spanish composers writing in a nationalist style at the turn of the century, there existed a desire not to remain in isolation. Thus Falla and Albéniz, by 1908, had made

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27 Hess, 15.
28 Ibid., 8, 22-23.
29 Ibid., 8.
30 Ibid., 16.
“that triple pact between them and Turina to write ‘Spanish music with views toward Europe.’”\textsuperscript{31} Perhaps not surprisingly, then, within a very few years following the disastrous war, many composers, including those under study here, are seeking inspiration both within their native cultures, and without: increasingly open to foreign influences, indeed actively traveling to other countries to study and learn under the most renowned composers and teachers. We might term this an “outside-inside” dichotomy, and Casals’ own life symbolizes it: while he spent much of his career in a self-imposed exile outside his native country, his Catalán identity and the social conditions of his own countrymen exerted a profound influence on him all his years.

It is evident, of course, that by the time the 1976 works of homage are commissioned, more avant-garde styles are now equally strong in their influence on Spanish composers. Catalán composers, in particular, had been anxious to leapfrog the traditional zarzuela-dominated musical style. Perhaps because they already felt culturally disenfranchised, they were more open to influences that, in truth, were not far to be found - specifically within neighboring France and in the music of Debussy, Ravel, Satie, Stravinsky, etc. While the older generation of homage composers were especially influenced by the music and musicians of Paris, the younger generation looked to Paris and beyond: Balada studied at Juilliard in New York City with Persichetti and Copland, Castillo took lessons in Paris with Nadia Boulanger, and Bernaola, upon winning the Rome Prize, studied in Italy with Petrassi and Lavagnino, and later in Darmstadt with Bruno Maderna. All the homage composers, then, matured in an environment of multiple crosscurrents: nationalist, introspective, yet looking (and traveling) across the Pyrenees and further for inspiration. Wagnerism and universalism had proven to be strong influences, indeed.

\textsuperscript{31} Livermore, 191, “música española con vistas a Europa.”
Chapter 4

Older Generation of Composers – Music and Influences

Joaquín Rodrigo, Sonata a la breve

Joaquín Rodrigo, one of the oldest of the 1976 homage composers, was born in 1901. Given his age, perhaps it isn’t surprising to note that his style is the most conservative of the group. He initially studied composition at the École Normale in Paris with Dukas, followed later by further studies in musicology at the Sorbonne.\(^{32}\) Joaquín Rodrigo was fascinated in particular with the guitar and vihuela, and while at the Sorbonne presented a paper on the history and performers of the vihuela de mano of 16\(^{th}\) century Spain.\(^{33}\) Like Montsalvatge, he also worked for a time as a music critic. Rodrigo is most famous for his Concierto Aranjuez for guitar and orchestra, and of all the homage composers, he remains today probably the most well known.

Rodrigo generally wrote in traditional forms, and though many feel that he wrote too conservatively, he was, in his own words, simply “faithful to a tradition.”\(^ {34}\) He has also been described as the best representative of neocasticismo. While there is no direct English translation for this word, the gist of the meaning is a combination of neo-classicism and

\(^{32}\) Marco Antonio de la Ossa Martinez, “La Música en la Guerra Civil Española” (PhD dissertation, Universidad de Castilla, 2009), 106.


nationalism. It arose in the early 20th century as a response to French neo-classicism, but with a distinctly Spanish flavor.  

The composer’s brief, written comments regarding this work reveal the source of his melodic ideas:

This sonata for violoncello and piano, written in memory of Pablo Casals, consists of three movements: Adagietto, scherzino, and allegretto. In the adagietto, a solemn melody is laid out which contains faint allusions to the Song of the Birds, the popular catalan folksong that Pablo Casals loved so much, a melody which, at times, is interrupted by brief piano episodes. The scherzino reaps off a flourish of pizzicatti in fourths, and which alternate with those of the piano. The allegretto presents the initial theme from the overture of El Pessebre [oratorio composed by Casals], and after being presented in various tonalities and episodic figures, ends in pianissimo harmonics.

The title of Rodrigo’s 1976 commission, Sonata a la breve, is a bit of an enigma, with several possible meanings. The “a la breve” part could simply refer to the common musical term “alla breve” or, since “a la breve” in Spanish can be translated “to the short one,” it can also be read as a play on words, with reference to the diminuitive physical stature of Casals himself. Or perhaps it refers to the brief duration of Rodrigo’s composition – a concentrated form of melodic and harmonic repetition with minimal development. In this piece Rodrigo finds inspiration within his (and Casals’) native culture. In the first movement, marked Adagietto, the composer quotes an excerpt of the Song of the Birds theme, and plays again and again with the 7th scale degree, first raised then lowered. The primacy of melody is everywhere here, demanding of the

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36 Preface to the score of Sonata a la breve in Homenaje a Pablo Casals (Barcelona: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1977), n.p. See Appendix I for the original Spanish text.
cellist a clear emphasis of the musical line and vocal phrasing. The piece, however, reveals its decidedly “modern” influences with a near-continuous backdrop of parallel chord structures in quartal harmony – a feature often associated with Rodrigo’s music – in the piano accompaniment (see figure 1).

This quartal idea is further exploited in the 2nd movement, Scherzino, where the cello melodic line is written almost entirely as a continuously ascending and descending sequence of leaps of a fourth, played pizzicato. This extended series of pizzicato notes in the cello line parallels closely both the open-string tuning and the “plucking” method of sound production of the guitar and vihuela, suggesting a direct connection between the subject of Rodrigo’s youthful musicological research and his later compositional style. The piano part is written as the barest of accompaniments, consisting of a single note repeated once each bar. This texture flips several times when the piano takes over the melodic fourths, and the cello line now intones one note each measure (see figure 2).

The fourths are finally compacted down to a half-step interval, when the melodic line ascends then descends entirely chromatically, through two full octaves. In the final movement, marked Allegro ma non troppo, the accompaniment in the piano consists almost entirely of open fifths (or inverted fourths!) underneath a simple, repeated-note melody in the cello. This texture is very briefly punctuated by sextuplet runs in both instruments, both ascending and descending, before the inverted fourth chords return in the piano, along with the simple, diatonic melody in the cello line. The most progressive and challenging performance elements in Rodrigo’s work consist of notes written at the upper extreme of the cello range, and especially the difficulty of maintaining accuracy of intonation while shifting up and down by fourths. The texture is not especially dense or complicated, as often is the case with music that is more progressive in approach, but rather more spartan in style, reminiscent of the music Rodrigo wrote specifically for children, such as his Album de Cecilia (1948) or Sonatina para dos Muñecas (1977), written for his daughter and grandchildren, respectively.38

38 Donis, 22.
Xavier Montsalvatge was born in Gerona in 1912 and like Mompou and many others of the time, was very interested in things Parisian – however, he only managed to visit Paris for short periods, spending most of his time in his native country. Though his primary studies centered in Barcelona, his influences, nevertheless, include Stravinsky and Les Six (particularly Milhaud), as well as the habanera and Afro-Cuban dance rhythms.\textsuperscript{39} Montsalvatge in fact did not have to go far to find foreign elements of inspiration. His interest in West Indian music (which manifested as a musical style of composition sometimes referred to as Antillanismo) derives from overhearing Catalanian fisherman – many of whom had served their military duty in Cuba and returned after the war – as they sang habaneras.\textsuperscript{40} Other than his published collection, \textit{Álbum de Habaneras} (1948), the most celebrated stylistic result is his song set, \textit{Cinco Canciones Negras} (1946), although elements of this style were also seen in his \textit{Tres Divertimentos} for Piano (1941), the middle movement of which is specifically modeled upon, and entitled, \textit{habanera}. Of this music, Montsalvatge stated:

\begin{quote}
I believe in this \textit{música indiana}, originally Spanish, exported overseas, reimported to our country and strengthened on the surface of the peninsula as a new, wandering and evocative invaluable treasure that cannot be appreciated by the “folklorists” and that which can most help the Catalan composer to unfold truly popular and proper art, accessible, liberated from local narrow-mindedness, with a wide universal appeal. For me, a \textit{sardana} is as beloved as a habanera. With the
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{39} Deborah Ann Dalton, “Xavier Montsalvatge’s Cinco Canciones Negras” (PhD dissertation, Univ. of Texas at Austin, 1996), vii.

difference that the *sardana* only got to Doedat de Severac [folk music composer] and the *habanera* as far as Ravel, having gone around the world.\(^{41}\)

Montsalvatge’s genius thus lay partly with his awareness of popular styles and current influences, and partly with a nature independent enough to choose his own models freely. Eventually he developed his own unique style of combining “ naïve melodic material with sophisticated chromatic harmony.”\(^{42}\)

The composer included the following terse commentary with the originally published score of his 1976 commission, *Microrapsòdia*:

> Corresponds to what the title indicates. Beginning with a popular catalan theme, preferred by Pau Casals, briefly hinted at and distorted, the work sets out with a freedom of form and language, giving to the violoncello soloist various opportunities to assert himself though the highest technical and expressive possibilities.\(^{43}\)

Montsalvatge thus pays homage to Casals, like Rodrigo, by looking within Catalán culture and paraphrasing the theme from the *Song of the Birds* – however, he evokes the tune in a whole-tone context, marking its inclusion with a recognizable entry but clothing it in modern garb. The paraphrase occurs twice: initially, at the end of an extended cello introduction, immediately preceding the piano entrance, followed by a long passage of obsessively repeated


\(^{43}\) Preface to the score of *Microrapsòdia* in *Homenaje a Pablo Casals* (Barcelona: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1977), n.p. See Appendix I for the original Spanish text.
notes in the piano (and shortly thereafter in the cello), suggesting the vigorous rhythms of flamenco style (see figures 3a and 3b).

![Figure 3. Montsalvatge, Microrapsòdia, mm. 29-30 and 31](image)

Further references to *cante jondo* style in the cello line include double-stop passages in which the lower note slides up, down, and around a central pitch, suggesting non-diatonic pitches as melodic ornamentation (see figure 4).

![Figure 4. Montsalvatge, Microrapsòdia, mm. 130-133](image)

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More “universalist,” avant-garde, extended techniques for the cellist include left-hand pizzicato, double-stops over the entire range of the instrument, often combined with glissandos, and harmonics. When the cello passage which opens the piece returns at the end, it is again in the upper registers of the cello, now accompanied by a continuous series of parallel polychords in the piano, with the final statement of the whole-tone version of the Song of the Birds paraphrase now closing the work with an ascending glissando, disappearing into nothing.

Federico Mompou, *El Pont*

Mompou, the oldest member of the homage composers, was born in Barcelona in 1893 and studied piano at the Barcelona Conservatory. Though close friends with Montsalvatge, he too developed a highly individual style. He moved to Paris for continued piano studies at the age of 18, eventually spending 18 more years of his life there after a successful debut of his music by his piano teacher, finally returning to Barcelona in 1941. As might be imagined, he was influenced by the music of Debussy, Ravel and especially Satie. In fact, according to Richard Paine, there are certain striking parallels between Mompou and Satie: both left their studies at the Paris Conservatoire unfinished, both wrote a series of piano miniatures which entirely eliminated bar lines, time and key signatures, and both wrote non-traditional performance directions – in Mompou’s case such markings as “under the weight of sleep” or “a little air.”

Jennifer Lee Hammill, on the other hand, points out equally striking similarities with yet another composer – Chopin:

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47 Paine, 63-64.
Each came from another country; each claimed French ancestry; each came to Paris in his twenties, moving easily in high society… both men’s careers as composers were identified with the piano. Both preferred small forms. Both employed elements of their native musical folklore. Works of both composers exhibit an introspective character and often suggest improvisation. Both composers intuitively understood the possibilities of the piano and were masters of creating beautiful sonorities.\(^{48}\)

That Mompou must have at least been aware of the similarities between himself and Chopin is implicit in the tribute inherent in Mompou’s *Variation On a Theme of Chopin*, based on the well known A-major Prelude.

Years before, Mompou had shown an early and original interest in sound through his *papelitos*, youthful harmonic exercises in which he attempted to “evolve the sound of bells on the piano,” imitating the sound of the bells produced in the foundry his grandparents owned.\(^{49}\) Paine continues:

Mompou describes his style as *primitivista*. He wished to achieve in his music a *recomençament*, a re-beginning. In other words he wished to create a new, fresh art, but one based on ancient and timeless musical qualities which he believed had been submerged by the Central European tradition with its emphasis on craft. Mompou was interested in the magic, indefinable force of musical sounds, harmonic sonorities and melodic patterns, rather than in the intellectual activity of creating musical structures and forms.\(^{50}\)


\(^{50}\) Ibid., 65. See also Walter Starkie, *Spain: A Musician’s Journey through Time and Space*, Vol. 2 (Geneva: EDISLI, 1958), 133.
Though he had at first questioned his own attempts, Mompou’s music eventually became a conscious, purposeful rejection of what he termed the “cerebralism dominant in our epoch.”\textsuperscript{51} His \textit{primitivista} style was thus one that became increasingly spare and concentrated, a distillation of music down to its barest elements, and he eventually became known for his miniaturist forms and austere textures. His style is further described as a “combination of diatonic melody with rich, often chromatic harmony.”\textsuperscript{52}

Mompou’s commentary on \textit{El Pont} \textit{[The Bridge]}, his contribution to the 1976 commissions, reveals the thoughts of an artist who is at once introspective yet self-disclosing, which is fitting for a composer known for producing music that is both quiet and communicative:

\textit{El Pont} is a reflection of a vivid landscape in one of my preferred walks, confidante and sentimental, in the \textit{Montjuïc} park of Barcelona. The principal theme of this work and its original title date from the year 1941, during the time of my permanent return to Barcelona, in the middle of world war, after many years residence in Paris. Since that time this music had remained “filed away,” though not forgotten, as it was always present in different sketches, among which stands out a project for a Concerto for piano and orchestra that never materialized. It has survived intact, resisting any and all realizations, until the present moment, in which it has crystallized in this work for cello and piano, a project of the General Commissary of Music, in homage to the violoncellist Pau Casals, on the one-hundredth anniversary of his birth. This curious bit of information confirms the long and difficult process of conception, in my particular case, in which the concretion of a work appears in the most unsuspected moment. I ask myself now if its resistance to abandoning its refuge could be explained by my indecision in the face of its character, perhaps too ‘melodic-romantic’ as a vehicle for expression, which is hardly valid in our time. Nevertheless, I must confess that, if in prior years such doubts overcame my spirit, in the intervening years they have been disappearing rather than growing stronger. Thus the moment has arrived in

which this theme, one I love very much, must come to light without any shyness.  

As noted above, *El Pont* was inspired by an actual bridge located near Barcelona’s *Montjuïc* hill, where the composer was fond of taking long walks. The piece thus fulfills, according to Ruiz de Gauna, two of Mompou’s four regular sources of inspiration: the rural Catalán landscape versus the agitation of the city, and the hidden mysteries of nature. As the composer mentions, it had originally been written years before as a piano piece, but withdrawn by the composer during a time when he doubted the validity of his own style. It is from this original composition that Mompou resurrected his ideas, and though he had long intended to use the melody in a future piano concerto, found the perfect vehicle when the 1976 commission came, with the addition of the cello.

In *El Pont*, Mompou employs conventional musical notation, meter signatures and barlines, although progressive influence is evident in that he eschews the use of a key signature, preferring instead the liberal use of accidentals. An extended piano introduction (non-existent in the piano solo version) concludes with a short section of bell-like chord structures, recalling the sound of Mompou’s “metallic chord,” first sketched out by the composer as a remembrance of

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53 Preface to the score of *El Pont* in *Homenaje a Pablo Casals* (Barcelona: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1977), n.p. See Appendix I for the original Spanish text.
54 Ruiz de Gauna, 89. The other two are: the piano music of Chopin, and Catalán folklore.
his walks by the sea, the mountains, or through his Barcelona neighborhood as a child.\footnote{Ruiz de Gauna, 15. See also Jennifer Lee Hammill, “The Development of Compositional Style in the Piano Music of Federico Mompou” (DMA dissertation, University of Washington, 1991), 13.} The opening section, up to and including the cello entrance, is distinguished mostly by a simple texture of piano chords, and displays Mompou’s penchant for arpeggiating, or rolling, chords (see figure 5).\footnote{Ibid., 45.}

The main melody is played at the cello entrance, with the piano continuing its rolled-chord accompaniment, this time with the addition of a short, chromatically descending gesture high up in its range. The texture then switches, and the piano takes over the melody with the cello providing the descending gesture in artificial harmonics. The section concludes with both parts returning to the previous opening material. The following middle section builds up to the dynamic (marked \textit{forte}) and emotional high point of the piece, wherein the melody is played in the upper ranges of the cello register, including a brief, yet demanding passage of double stops, before arriving finally to the long held note at the very bottom of the cello range. The final section is a return of the more relaxed opening section, but with the cello melody now transposed up an octave. The last 13 bars feature a descending motive accompanied by an insistent B-flat pedal. The texture is never very dense, and any time the dynamic level rises, the texture thins.
out, so that the cellist is not in much danger of being overshadowed by the accompaniment. Yet despite Mompou’s penchant for a bare, austere approach, the El Pont melody is no less luscious – as one reviewer described it, it is “the romantic energy of Rachmaninov [living] on indirectly in one of [Mompou’s] most beautiful works….”

Joaquim Homs, In Memoriam Pau Casals

Joaquim Homs, born in 1906 in Barcelona, was the only composer among the seven who studied the cello, trained to become an engineer, and took composition lessons with Gerhard. According to Menéndez Aleyxandre and Pizà, Homs’ music “shows great unity and clarity of structure, achieving an intense expressivity with a minimum of means” and “although he remained loyal to modernism, most of his later works do not adhere to strict 12-note technique.”

Regarding his commission, In Memoriam Pau Casals, Homs writes the following:

I began this particular composition with the intention of reflecting in it the particular conception of music that characterized Casals all his life, and especially his clear preference for the Classic and Romantic eras, and his profound regard for Catalán folksong. As soon as I had freely written the first measures of the work, which for me always have a determining influence on their ultimate development, I observed that the particular groups of notes that appear there had a close connection with those that occur in the Sarabande from the Suite in c-minor of Bach for violoncello solo. Since this was precisely one of my preferred works when I played this instrument and I retain unforgettable memories of the versions of the Bach Suites that I had heard Casals interpret in my youth, I decided to

59 Janés, 214.
61 Ibid.
attempt the adventure of incorporating the above-mentioned Sarabande in the work that I dedicated to his memory. From that moment on I based the composition on the contrast of musical periods derived from the introduction along with others based on variants of the Sarabande, finally mixing them all together in a tense and elegiac conclusion that in turn condenses into a popular type of melody. I sincerely believe that the integration of a fragment of the work from an author of another era into one’s own, which is the only occasion in which I have done this, in this case does not distort the internal unity of the same, nor does it act as a simple ‘collage,’ but rather contributes effectively to linking it more closely to the remembrance of Pau Casals for the reasons expressed at the beginning of this commentary.\textsuperscript{62}

If the central, unifying idea in the piece, then, is the quotation from the Sarabande of the C-minor Suite by Bach, how is his “loyalty” to modernism reflected simultaneously with a tribute to previous musical styles, along with an actual quote from a pre-existing composition? The piece begins with dramatic glissandos up and down, in the lower registers of the piano, and with a short melodic cell – 4 notes tightly packed within the span of 5 semitones – played \textit{forte} in the upper register of the cello, concluding with a dramatic, downward glissando. This is immediately followed by a double-stop, snap \textit{pizzicato} in the lower register of the instrument, and then a harmonic note high up on the G-string. Thus within the first few bars of the piece, we experience extremes of tessitura, dynamics, and articulation (see figure 6).

\textsuperscript{62} Preface to the score of \textit{In Memoriam Pau Casals} in \textit{Homenaje a Pablo Casals} (Barcelona: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1977), n.p. See Appendix I for the original Spanish text.
Finally at measure 15 a calmer mood prevails, and the Bach Sarabande melody is played, in its entirety, in the cello, accompanied by quiet parallel chord movement in the piano. Another sudden and vigorous, downward glissando in the low piano register leads into the next section, where rhythmic material from the opening is repeated, now with extended melodic lines in the cello, and spare (but fortissimo) accompanying lines in the piano. This transitional section leads directly into a delicate, contrapuntal section, which, while not strictly dodecaphonic, suggests the modernist influence of his studies with Gerhard. The 11-note sequence of this passage is voiced initially in the cello, then immediately thereafter in stretto entries in both hands of the piano. This section, clearly influenced more by progressive techniques than the earlier Andalusian style, nevertheless gives a nod to Classical symmetry and style with what are initially clear-cut, 4-bar phrases, and a balanced, light texture (see figure 7).
Immediately following is the fastest section of the piece, marked *Animato* and *forte*, wherein the “down-up” contour of the original Bach melody is presented in the cello, but with a non-melodic series of notes characterized by leaps of a major seventh. Immediately thereafter is a more languid version of the *Animato* (marked *poco piu mosso*), utilizing here the actual intervallic distances from the first five notes of the original Sarabande melody in a conventional 4-bar structure, though now in quarter-note augmentation.

Another vigorous transitional section follows, leading into a series of extended harmonics in the cello line, again following only the contour, rather than the actual pitches, of the Sarabande melody. Thereafter follows a syncopated section, with sparse, staccato eighth notes – marked *leggero*, and played partially *col legno* in the cello – with offbeat accents in the piano as well, marking this “jazzy” section, together with the preceding ones, almost as component parts of a Romantic era “theme-and-variations” on the original tune. The challenge for the cellist in this section is negotiating a precisely articulated rhythmic figure with the piano, while playing...
double-stops marked with many accidentals, not forgetting to remain in a piano dynamic – all while jumping back and forth between pizzicato and col legno (see figure 8)!

Figure 8. Homs, In Memoriam Pau Casals, mm. 145-148

A further section of multiple glissandos and syncopated, repeated-note melodies leads to the final restatement of the original melody in the cello, followed by a piu calmo section, where the melodic line in the cello is written in the extreme upper registers of the instrument with multiple double stops, and where the rhythms stretch out markedly. The rate of change in the piano line likewise declines drastically, to just a series of moderately-paced eighth notes. Meanwhile the cello plays its last quiet, ascending glissandos, finally ending on a single high pitch, with widely-spaced chords played softly in the piano until the final chord, held over the last 4 measures, completely dies out.

The extended Bach Sarabande quotation which is the primary inspiration for this piece is used not only as motivic idea, but as a generator of melodic contour, and as a basis for phrase
shape. With these relationships, Homs’ work connects the modern compositional approach with previous eras and styles of music, and also to the musician at the heart of this tribute.
Chapter 5

Young Maestros – Music and Influences

Leonardo Balada, Tres Transparencias de un Preludio de Bach

Balada, the youngest homage composer, was born in Barcelona in 1933, and studied at Juilliard in New York City with Persichetti and Copland. According to the composer’s own words, his first years in New York (1956-60) were difficult and challenging:

I felt a strong necessity to become up to date aesthetically, to look to the future and not be criticized as a reactionary. How could it be otherwise for a liberal young fellow brought up in Spain, opposed to Franco’s conservatism? On the other hand the music I was listening to in New York was not for me. The strict rules of serial techniques were not fitting with my personality while on the other hand, the free-open “aleatoric” techniques seemed to me capricious. \(^{63}\)

Balada later stated that he did indeed have an “avant-garde period” which lasted from the mid 1960s to the mid 1970s, during which time he did not consider melody part of his style. \(^{64}\) Following this, he adopted a new melodic and “ethnic” approach, blending ethnic music with avant-garde techniques. \(^{65}\) This eventually led to a new, personal style described as a “presentation of familiar melodies in distorted surroundings.” \(^{66}\)


A significant event for Casals was his chance discovery of the Bach Cello Suites, and his intention, which took years to realize, of performing entire Suites in concert. He became known as a champion of the music of Bach in general and the Solo Suites in particular. Leonardo Balada of course knew this, and in his *Tres Transparencias de un Preludio de Bach* ("Three Transparencies of a Prelude by Bach"), the composer pays tribute both to the genius of Bach and to his greatest champion.

Balada’s commentary from the originally published score, written in the third person, is as follows:

This work is a free transfiguration of the prelude to the first suite for violoncello by Bach. Composed by commission from the General Ministry of Fine Arts of Madrid ‘to the memory of Pau Casals,’ this work has a double edge. On the one side its relationship with Casals, since the great violoncellist made famous his interpretations of the Bach suites. On the other, Balada using motives from classic works follows his recent creative tendency. Last May, the Pittsburg Symphony premiered his work ‘Homage to Casals and Homage to Sarasate’ in which the composer makes use of musical themes related to the two musicians. Presently Balada is composing a work for piano entitled ‘Chopin’ which uses themes from the first ballade of the Polish musician. In any case, this form of composition presents a difficult task. On the one hand the work of the musician that is quoted must be present, yet on the other hand, the stamp of the composer that utilizes such quotes must be evident at all times. In the ‘Transparencies,’ the violoncello generally has a conservative character, while the piano is more contemporaneous and, at times, even radical. This has not only a symbolic purpose, but also a strictly artistic one, since Balada currently is content in juxtaposing styles. Nevertheless, the piano does not cease to act in the role of keyboard, foregoing other unorthodox possibilities. Each one of the three parts of the work forms its own entity. The first movement is moderate, subtle and always in hushed tones. The second by contrast is a burst of sonority, always forte or fortissimo. The third follows a continuously rising line – beginning in moderation – in terms of activity, dynamics, and tension.  

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67 Preface to *Tres Transparencias de un Preludio de Bach* in *Homenaje a Pablo Casals* (Barcelona: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1977), n.p. See Appendix I for the original Spanish text.
In the case of the first *Transparency*, the description of Balada’s style mentioned previously – “familiar melodies in distorted surroundings” – is apt. Here, direct quotes from Bach’s G-major Prelude may be heard, but mostly in snippets – a passing reference, sometimes inverted, followed by a quiet, extended, fantasy-like exploration of the continuous, 16th-note background rhythm, along with ascending and descending scalar passages. Balada evokes the original Bachian “text” while juxtaposing it alongside natural and artificial harmonics in an abbreviated, otherworldly structure. “Universalist,” avant-garde compositional techniques evident in this piece also include elements of indeterminacy, where the performers are directed to repeat certain passages, or chord sequences, for unspecified lengths of time. One of the particularly challenging techniques for the cellist is performing accurate artificial harmonics low in the register of the instrument, especially when jumping back and forth between G-string and C-string notes (see figure 9).

![Figure 9. Balada, *Tres Transparencias de un Preludio de Bach*, movement I, excerpt](image)

If the first *Transparency* was more traditional (employing standard key signatures and regular meter), introspective and reflective, the second by contrast is more progressive and
extroverted – as the composer describes it, “a burst of sonority, always \textit{forte} or \textit{fortissimo}.”

Here Balada dispenses entirely with conventional key signatures, meter and barlines. It is also in this second movement where the modern symbols and instructions found on the title page become especially pertinent – for example, an arrow pointing to the right signifies that the “note continues without repeating” or short, thick, vertically-oriented arrows (pointing either up or down) signify “very high clusters” and “very low clusters,” respectively (see figure 10).  

![Figure 10. Balada, Tres Transparencias de un Preludio de Bach, title page, excerpt](image)

Such symbolic and consciously imprecise representations of duration and tessitura reveal the more avant-garde approach that characterizes much of Balada’s music. Here we find a

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68 Title page of \textit{Tres Transparencias de un Preludio de Bach}. “…un estallido de sonoridad, siempre fuerte o fortíssimo.”

69 Ibid. Translation by the composer.
greater emphasis on textural variation and temporal duration than on notational precision. For example, the composer marks *accelerando* in the score, while explicitly directing the pianist to do so “independently” from the cellist (movt. 3, pg. 11) – or defines his *rallantando* marking as signifying slowing down in an even manner “regardless of the notation” (movt. 2, pg. 9). The purpose of such instructions reveals a rhythmic structure conceived by the composer that is not intended to fit or support a conventional meter as much as to produce an independent effect or gesture. The movement begins *fortissimo*, with the cello and piano lines in relatively strict alternation: one player sustaining a chord or cluster while the other intones a passage of fast notes – after which the two parts switch roles. Further consciously imprecise instructions direct the pianist to play “very fast – faster than regular [thirty-second] notes – but always clear and distinct” – and as with other pieces that manifest such progressive, non-traditional construction, the writing in this movement generally necessitates that the cellist read from the score, rather than a separate cello part during performance, simply to stay together with the pianist (see figure 11).

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Figure 11. Balada, *Tres Transparencias de un Preludio de Bach*, movement II, excerpt

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70 Ibid. Translation by the composer.
The third and final *Transparency*, according to the composer, “follows a continuously rising line – beginning in moderation – in terms of activity, dynamics, and tension.” Like the second movement, the composer omits standard key and meter signatures, but retains the use of barlines, as in the first movement. The increase in intensity over the course of the movement occurs against a backdrop of near-continuous 16-note rhythms, recalling the rhythmic structure of the first *Transparency*. The “rising line” begins with the barest texture – a single whole note, marked *piano*, played by the cello alone – which gradually changes to successively smaller subdivisions of the beat: first eighth notes, then triplet figures, and finally sixteenth notes. The pianist enters with sporadic groups of four, and then three sixteenth notes, foreshadowing the ongoing rhythmic backdrop that characterizes much of the movement.

As in the first *Transparency*, Balada quotes a brief melodic excerpt from the Bach’s G-Major Prelude, but uses the idea more as melodic cell, replicating it in successively higher ranges, often against itself, in both hands of the piano. The cell is then written as 4-note chord clusters, marked *crescendo poco a poco*, followed by the arrival, at the peak of dynamic intensity, of repeated clusters of four and five (unspecified) notes (see figure 12).

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71 Preface to *Tres Transparencias de un Preludio de Bach*. “…sigue una línea siempre ascendente – desde su moderación – en cuanto a actividad, dinámica y tensión.”

The clear emphasis in this movement – and part of the challenge to the performers – is managing an even and continuous textural thickening and consistently increasing dynamic intensity over a relatively large span of time.

Balada’s music consistently exhibits many of the most progressive, avant-garde techniques and passages, and it is interesting to note that he also is the composer to have traveled the furthest afield in pursuing his musical education. Surely the multi-national exposure and education afforded by such travels remains an important element of the broadening and modernizing of Spanish musical styles.

Manuel Castillo, *Ricercare a Pau Casals*

Manuel Castillo was born in 1930 and, like Bernaola, this places him squarely within the “Generation of ‘51,” a group of avant-garde composers, mostly in their young 20s and at the
early stages of their careers following World War II.\textsuperscript{72} In 1963 he briefly entered Catholic religious orders, during which time he composed many organ pieces, as well as masses, motets, choral works and hymns.\textsuperscript{73} Although he was primarily known as a professional pianist, for many years he also taught piano, composition and musical aesthetics, finally gaining in 1972 a professorship of Composition and Orchestration, from which he retired in 1995.\textsuperscript{74}

According to Cureses, Castillo’s “aesthetic position results... from an independent, demanding inner spirit” and “he is, therefore, as far from a traditional conservatism as he is from the extreme avant garde.”\textsuperscript{75} At first glance Castillo’s approach in his contribution, \textit{Ricercare a Pau Casals}, does in fact appear fairly traditional, even a bit stodgy, as he employs standard rhythmical notation (i.e., one sees primarily eighth- and sixteenth notes on the page), a rather pedestrian tempo marking of \textit{eighth note equals 54}, and a complete absence of directions indicating any change of tempo – except for a \textit{ritardando} marking for only the last 3 notes of the initial cello entry and the final five notes of the piece. But upon closer examination, the score reveals a more modern and unconventional design: along with a total lack of barlines and key signatures, the piece consists \textit{entirely} of eighth- and sixteenth-notes, with only an occasional dotted note or \textit{fermata}. Furthermore, sustained chords are found exclusively in the piano, signified using extended, horizontal dashes, with and without slur markings at the end (see figure 13).

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
Tomás Marco states that while Castillo as a pianist “…experienced [felt] time in a very flexible way,” he was “unyielding with rhythmic security, as manifested in his compositions.”

While the musical score does indeed seem to demand a methodical, almost mechanistic approach, the composer himself felt free to indulge a certain artistic freedom in a performance setting. Thus we find here an understated mix of the traditional with the unorthodox – a style which may result partly from Castillo’s studies in Paris with Nadia Boulanger, whose teaching introduced him to “…a curious mixture of the Schola Cantorum and the impressionists.”

Indeed, along with the original, printed score Castillo includes the following brief, formal commentary:

The title of this piece evokes an ancient imitative, contrapuntal form. The author has not intended to realize such a scheme. He has, however, had in mind the free character of voices in dialogue. The remembrance of Casals establishes an uninterrupted, expressive and tense melody which the piano listens to without intervening. This song appears a second time in its inverted form, marked by

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77 Ibid., 15: “…un curioso mestizaje entre la Schola Cantorum y los impresionistas.”
transparent but incisive harmonies. The third and final exposition is a simple imitation in inverted canon in the piano, which renounces its polyphonic possibilities in order to be heard two times in the most austere presentation.78

The piece begins with the main melodic idea – an extended series of notes moving mostly by step (and occasionally by leap) with a down-up-down contour – played in the right hand of the piano with similar, contrary motion in the left hand, punctuated briefly by sudden bursts of 3-note clusters at the outer extremes of the piano range. When the cello first enters, it alone plays the original, right-hand piano melody in inversion, now elongated to three times the original length, but still characterized by the same gradual up-down-up-down motion. When the piano re-joins the cello, it plays 3- and 4-note clusters beginning in the upper reaches of the range, repeated 2, 3, and 4 times, and then held for varying periods (indicated by the horizontal dashes mentioned above). As the cello continues intoning its drawn-out series of eighth- and sixteenth-notes, it gradually rises in pitch until high up in its register. As this happens, the left-hand piano chords gradually change, moving lower and lower in their register, while the right hand moves higher and higher, increasing the distance between them. During this middle section, one sees in the piano part many more horizontal dashes than notes, indicating sounds that sustain much more than they change, as if symbolizing a “dialogue” in which one voice either has less to say, or says it with more intransigence. This section ends with sudden, 5-note chord clusters, played fortissimo by the piano, at the extreme upper end of its range. Immediately following is another cello solo, this time playing the rhythms of its original entrance with a new, descending melodic figure, played mostly in double stops of a 6th, and occasional double-stopped grace notes, as if attempting, but failing, something new (See figure 14).

78 Preface to Ricercare a Pau Casals in Homenaje a Pablo Casals (Barcelona: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1977), n.p. See Appendix I for the original Spanish text.
After three repetitions of the falling/failing figure, the final section of the piece begins, with cello and piano together again. The cello now repeats its original melody exactly as played before, while the piano, instead of the playing the original sustained chords, enters two beats later in strict inverted canon, with the right hand doubling the left, four octaves above.

One of the performance considerations in a work such as this is maintaining precise rhythmic accuracy and a close-knit ensemble. For the pianist this is less difficult, since he or she is reading from the score and can simply sustain the chords indicated by horizontal dashes until seeing the cellist arrive at the next written chord. For the cellist, however, who lacks sustained notes, the absence of a regular metrical cycle demands a strong, inner “metronome” in order to keep a steady tempo. In sum, a performance of Ricercare a Pau Casals requires both the “rhythmic security” and “flexible time” for which the composer was known. Castillo’s work – by taking the outward form of an ancient language, but employing the techniques of an unconventional, modern voice – represents Casals himself, who symbolizes connecting the old (or traditional) with the new.
Carmelo Alonso Bernaola, the third youngest of the homage composers, was born in 1929 in Ochandiano and educated in Madrid. After winning the Rome Prize in 1959, he continued his studies in Italy with Petrassi, Lavagnino and later in Darmstadt with Bruno Maderna. Along with Castillo, Bernaola was classed as one of the “Generation of ‘51,” although he was known as much as a clarinetist as a composer. In addition to his “serious” composing he also wrote music for films (though he thought of the two as strictly separate categories), and lectured on the topic of film music at the Universidad de Valladolid. Strongly influenced by the avant-garde style of the time, he founded a school for music in Vitoria and created a studio for electronic music there.

Bernaola’s 1976 commission, Tiempos, subtitled Música para un Centenario: Casals, contains multiple examples of avant-garde approaches, including elements of indeterminacy, lack of traditional measures, and “…sporadic repetition… of musical cells without thematic personality,” and more than all the other commissions, Tiempos has the most non-traditional and avant-garde appearance upon first look, including even the composer’s use of opposing

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80 Marco, 168.
82 Heine.
83 José Luis Garcia del Busto, *Carmelo Bernaola: La obra de un maestro* (Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 2004), 153: “…esporádicas repeticiones… de células musicales sin personalidad de tema.”
arrows to indicate separate systems on each page of the score (see figure 16, below). Regarding his composition, Bernaola wrote the following:

‘Tiempo’ is a piece written by commission of the Ministry of Music, in honor of the centenary of Pablo Casals. Written for cello and piano, it is the two instruments which lead the musical discussion; if because of the nature of the writing the cello gives the impression of a certain preponderance, the fact is that it is not intentional. It is the combination of both which conforms and gives unity to the formal and discursive sense of the piece. The title comes from distinct elements of temporal organization, which in the form of flexible writing and various metronomic indications, appear juxtaposed and even superimposed.84

Indeed, an examination of the score reveals its decidedly modern roots: preceding the actual musical notation is a page of indicaciones in the form of a legend or definition of symbols used in the piece. These symbols – used in the composition to portray such things as note length or rhythm, relative speed of execution, presence or speed of vibrato, length of resonance, chord clusters, pitch, etc. – are given precise, though unconventional definitions, such as “lengthening of the sound, without vibrating, unless otherwise indicated,” “group of notes executed as fast as possible,” or “sounds improvised within the range given in parentheses and on the stated rhythmic schemes” (see Figure 15).85

84 Preface to Tiempos: Musica para un Centenario, Casals in Homenaje a Pablo Casals (Barcelona: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1977), n.p. See Appendix I for the original Spanish text.
85 Preface to Tiempos, Música para un Centenario: Casals in Homenaje a Pablo Casals (Barcelona: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1977), n.p. “Prolongación del sonido, sin vibrar, mientras no exista otra indicación,” “grupo de notas que se ejecutan lo más rápido posible,” “sonidos que se improvisan dentro del ámbito de sonidos señalados entre paréntesis y sobre los esquemas rítmicos marcados.”
In the musical notation itself, one notices immediately the complete lack of bar lines, other than a handful used only to designate repeated sections. There is no meter designated, though many of the modern notational symbols employed are used to indicate temporal duration (“at least five seconds”). Like Castillo, Bernaola makes extensive use of horizontal dashes in both the cello and piano parts to indicate temporal duration. The title itself, *Tiempo*, can be translated as “times” with a numerical, rhythmical meaning (as in “four-four time”) or with a larger cyclical meaning (as in “epoch” or “season”). The emphasis, therefore, in this composition is clearly not one of traditional melody, meter, or harmony, but rather a temporal and textural approach, characterized by subjective timing, and based on precise sonorities and articulations. There are specific timings notated at the bottom of each page, and metronome markings in the preface, however the composer writes that “the metronomic indications are
always approximate.” Indeed, given the unconventional structure and the nature of the subjective timing of the work, the compositional design of Tiempos necessitates that both cellist and pianist perform this work from the score, since, like the second movement of Balada’s Tres Transparencias, a separate cello part would be completely impractical (see figure 16).

Instructions to the performers include directions for the cellist as to when to start and stop playing sul ponticello, how fast and when to vibrate, precisely when to start a sound, or to accent

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a note, how much relative variation to apply to a bending of pitches (“almost glissando”), when to put on and take off a mute, and even to play the highest note possible, followed by a specified pitch and then a series of un-specified pitches within a given melodic contour. The instructions are generally written very precisely, yet there are many sections of improvisatory or aleatoric writing where, for example, the cellist is instructed to “repeat ad lib.” while the pianist is directed only to “repeat 2 times,” or to bend a pitch up and down and around a given note “without reaching the semitone.”

Like Balada, Bernaola was one of the younger homenaje composers, and also traveled further from Spain than the others, for studies in Rome, Italy, and in one of the most famous centers of avant-garde musical composition, Darmstadt. His travels and education helped to shape a more progressive approach, and illustrate part of the influence on the broadening and modernizing of Spanish musical styles.

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87 Tiempos: Musica para un Centenario, Casals in Homenaje a Pablo Casals (Barcelona: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia, 1977), n.p.
Chapter 6

Summary and Conclusion

The 1976 commissions grew out of an official, direct effort to memorialize the life, talent and contributions of one of the twentieth-century’s most celebrated cellists, musicians, and humanitarians. The seven composers behind the musical compositions all grew up in Spain within roughly the same time span, and so share in a common cultural heritage which at the start of the twentieth century was characterized, as we have seen, more by introspection than innovation. That the works they created differ so markedly from the stereotyped Andalusian style popular during the time of their youth reflects the tremendous stylistic evolution that occurred in Spanish music, as it gradually opened up to influences in the rest of the Western world in the intervening decades.

Part of the broadening influence, ironically, came from looking close to home: specifically within the cultural heritage shared by Casals and many of the composers, particularly Catalan folk music and folk song. Ann Livermore suggests that the Catalan affinity for vocal forms and styles arises directly from the shared sense of identity bestowed both by local language and local music, and especially by their intersection:

“Catalans, like Basques, are preoccupied with the preservation of language and this gives importance to traditional forms concerned with musical texts. The Orfeo Catalá, like the great Basque choirs, is deeply rooted in popular sentiment which in this province is poured out with lyrical rather than dramatic force.”

Of all the classical repertoire available to him, Casals chose as his signature piece this simple Catalan folk song, *El Cant dels Ocells*, and various composers in turn quoted or paraphrased it to honor him, reflecting at once the rootedness of cultural identity, but also a keen sense of independence in pursuit of the freedom to self-define. In addition to musical heritage, then, part of the broadening and modernization of Spanish music stems from the politically independent will and autonomous language and identity of the Catalan people.

In addition to the influence of local culture and the nationalist music of their predecessors, the seven composers commissioned by the Spanish government were also profoundly influenced by the irresistible influence of progressive currents in Paris, Rome, Darmstadt and New York, and some of the most famous composers and teachers of the time, including Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, Dukas, Boulanger, Gerhard, Maderna, Copland, and Persichetti.

The 1976 commissions of *homenaje* created to honor Casals represent the profound esteem that these composers felt for the great cellist, as well as their own shared cultural heritage, and together form a unique and valuable addition to the cello repertoire. With this study it is hoped that cellists in particular, and musicians in general, will gain a deepened understanding of the technical approaches, stylistic antecedents and cultural context of these pieces, which collectively highlight the remarkable evolution of Spanish and Catalán musical styles across the 20th century.
Bibliography


Appendix I

The complete Spanish text of each composer’s commentary, from the original autograph score, *Homenaje a Pablo Casals*, published in Barcelona in 1977 by the Ministerio de Educacion y Ciencia, Dirección General del Patrimonio Artístico y Cultural, follows.

1. Joaquín Rodrigo, *Sonata a la breve*

   “Esta sonata para violoncello y piano, escrita a la memoria de Pablo Casals, consta de tres movimientos: Adagietto, scherzino, y allegretto. En el adagietto se tiende una grave melodía que contiene leves alusiones al Canto de los Pajaros, la canción popular catalana que Pablo Casals tanto amaba, melodía que, a veces, se interrumpe por breves episodios del piano. El scherzino desgrana un giro en pizzicatti del violoncello en cuartas justas y que se alternan con las del piano. El allegretto expone el tema inicial de la obertura de El Pessebre, y después de ser presentado en diversas tonalidades y de algunos episodios figurativos, termina en armónicos en pianissimo.”

2. Xavier Montsalvatge, *Microrapsòdia*

   “Responde a lo que el título indica. Partiendo de un tema popular catalán, predilecto de Pau Casals, fugazmente insinuado y distorsionado, la obra tiende con libertad de forma y lenguaje, proporcionar al violoncelo solista varias oportunidades para afirmarse con sus mejores posibilidades técnicas y expresivas.”

3. Federico Mompou, *El Pont*

   “El Pont es un reflejo de un paisaje vivido en uno de mis paseos preferidos, confidentes y sentimentales, por el parque de Montjuïc de Barcelona. El tema principal de esta obra y su título de origen data del año 1941, época de mi retorno definitivo a Barcelona, en plena guerra mundial, después de largos años de residencia en París. Desde entonces esta música quedó ‘en archivo’ que no en olvido, pues siempre estuvo presente en diferentes esbozos, entre los que sobresalía el proyecto de un Concierto para piano y orquesta que nunca se llegó a realizar. Ha sobrevivido intacto, resistiéndose a toda realización hasta el momento presente, en el que ha cristalizado en esta obra para violoncelo y piano, encargo de la Comisaría General de la Música, en homenaje al violoncelista Pau Casals en el centenario de su nacimiento. Este curioso dato, viene a confirmar el largo y dificultoso proceso de concepción, en mi caso particular, en el que la concreción de una obra aparece en el momento más insospechado. Me pregunto ahora, si su
resistencia en abandonar su refugio, podría explicarse por una indecisión mía frente a su carácter quizá demasiado ‘melódico-romántico’ como vehículo de expresión poco válida en nuestra época. Sin embargo, debo confesar que, si en años anteriores tales dudas invadieron mi espíritu, en el transcurso de los años han ido desapareciendo en vez de acentuarse. Ha llegado, pues, el momento de que este tema, muy querido por mí, nazca a la luz sin retraimiento alguno.”

4. Joaquim Homs, *In Memoriam Pau Casals*

“Inicié esta composición con el ánimo de reflejar en ella la particular concepción de la música que caracterizó a Casals durante toda su vida y en especial su clara preferencia por las épocas clásica y romántica y su profunda estima del cancionero popular catalán. Tan pronto hube escrito libremente los primeros compases de la obra, que para mí tienen siempre una influencia determinante en su ulterior desarrollo, observé que las agrupaciones de notas que intervienen en los mismos tenían una estrecha relación con las que se suceden en la Sarabanda de la Suite en Do menor de Bach para violoncello solo. Como esta era precisamente una de mis obras preferidas cuando yo tocaba este instrumento y conservo recuerdos inolvidables de las versiones de las Suites de Bach que había oído interpretar a Casals en mi juventud, me decidí a intentar la aventura de integrar dicha Sarabanda a la obra que dedicaba a su memoria. A partir de aquel momento fui configurando la composición a base del contraste de períodos musicales derivados de la introducción con otros basados en variantes de la Sarabanda, confluyendo todos ellos finalmente, en una conclusión tensa y elegiaca que se condensa en torno a una melodía de sabor popular. Creo sinceramente que la integración de un fragmento de la obra de un autor de otra época en la propia, que es la única ocasión en que la he realizado, no desfigura en este caso la unidad interna de la misma ni actúa como un simple ‘collage,’ sino que contribuye con eficacia a vincularla más estrechamente al recuerdo de Pau Casals por los motivos expuestos al comienzo del presente comentario.”

5. Leonardo Balada, *Tres Transparències d’un Preludi de Bach*

“Esta obra es una transfiguración libre del preludio de la primera suite para violoncelo de Bach. Compuesta por encargo de la Dirección General de Bellas Artes de Madrid ‘A la memoria de Pau Casals,’ esta obra tiene doble filo. Por un lado su relación con Casals, ya que el gran violoncelista hizo famosa sus interpretaciones de las suites de Bach. Por otro, el utilizar motivos de obras clásicas por Balada, sigue su reciente tendencia creadora. En mayo pasado, la Sinfónica de Pittsburg estrenó su obra ‘Homenaje a Casals y Homenaje a Sarasate’ en la que el compositor hace uso de temas musicales relacionados con los dos músicos. Actualmente, Balada compone una obra para piano con el título ‘Chopin’ en la cual utiliza temas de la primera balada del músico polaco. En todo caso, esta forma de componer presenta una ardua tarea. Por un lado la obra del músico que se cita debe de estar presente y por el otro, el sello del compositor que utiliza tales citas debe aparecer evidente en todo momento. En las ‘Transparencias,’ el violoncelo tiene generalmente un carácter conservador, mientras el piano es más contemporáneo y, a veces, hasta radical. Ello no solo tiene un propósito simbólico, sino también estrictamente artístico, ya que Balada se complazce actualmente en la yuxtaposición de estilos. Sin embargo, el piano no deja de actuar en el teclado, prescindiendo de otras posibilidades no ortodoxas. Cada
una de las tres partes de la obra forman un ente propio. El primer movimiento es moderado, sutil y siempre a baja voz. El segundo por el contrario es un estallido de sonoridad, siempre fuerte o fortísimo. El tercero sigue una línea siempre ascendente – desde su moderación – en cuanto a actividad, dinámica y tensión.”

6. Manuel Castillo, *Ricercare a Pau Casals*

   “El título de esta página evoca una antigua forma contrapuntística imitativa. El autor no ha pretendido hacer una actualización de aquel esquema. Sí ha tenido presente el carácter libre de voces que dialogan. El recuerdo de Casals impone una ininterrumpida melodía expresiva y tensa que el piano, en su primera exposición, escucha sin intervenir. Este canto aparece por segunda vez en su forma invertida y enmarcada en armonías transparentes pero incisivas. La tercera y última exposición es una sencilla imitación en canon invertido del piano, que renuncia a sus posibilidades polifónicas para hacer oír las dos veces en la más austera presentación.”

7. Carmelo Alonso Bernaola, *Tiempo – Música para un Centenario: Casals*

   “‘Tiempo’ es una pieza realizada por encargo de la Comisaría de la Música, con motivo del centenario de Pau Casals. Escrita para violoncelo y piano, son los dos instrumentos los que conducen el discurso musical; si bien por la propia naturaleza de la escritura, el violoncelo puede dar la impresión de gozar de cierta preponderancia, el hecho es que no se ha pretendido que así fuera. Es el conjunto de ambos, lo que conforma y da unidad al sentido discursivo y formal de la pieza. El título viene dado por los distintos elementos de organización temporal, que en forma de escritura-flexible e indicaciones metrónómicas diversas, aparecen yuxtapuestos e incluso superpuestos.”