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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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Julian Bream's 20th Century Guitar:
An Album's Influence on the Modern Guitar Repertoire

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the degree requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Music

by

Taylor Jonathon Greene

June 2011

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Julian Bream is not only a virtuosic guitarist, but is also well known as a pioneer who expanded the repertoire of the classical guitar by incorporating modernist works into his programs and recordings. John Duarte, a leading figure in guitar scholarship, considered Bream's influence on the repertoire to have been not only greater than any other guitarist of his time, but also considered Bream a vital figure in retaining the well-being of the guitar in the modern world.¹ Duarte believed that Bream saved the guitar repertoire when it was in severe danger of "ossification and stagnation," and includes Bream among his list of "men in the history of the guitar [who] made different, key contributions to the progress of the guitar: Sor, Torres, Tárrega,... Segovia, Augustine, ... [and] Julian Bream."²

In 1967 Bream released *20th Century Guitar*, an album that would not only legitimate works that had never before been recorded by a professional guitarist, but also inspire future guitarists and composers to continue to expand the concert-guitar repertoire. This album represents the first instance in which a major guitarist recoded modernist music, and in doing so broke away from the stagnant Segovian repertoire. By the time he recorded *20th Century Guitar*, Bream had already succeeded in garnering interest in Elizabethan music with his performances and recordings of lute music, and he had managed to record a contemporary British composer's work (Lennox Berkeley's *Sonatina*) on an otherwise conservative album, *The Art of Julian Bream*. However, it was

1. John W. Duarte, "Julian Bream: The Contribution," *Classical Guitar* 1/1 (September/October 1982): 9.

2. Ibid., 10.

not until *20th Century Guitar* that a professional and renowned guitarist had recorded works so thoroughly modernist as Reginald Smith Brindle's *El Polifemo de Oro*, Benjamin Britten's *Nocturnal*, Frank Martin's *Quatre pièces brèves*, and Hans Werner Henze's *Drei Tentos*. Curiously, the album also featured two of Heitor Villa-Lobos' famous *Études*, Nos. 5 and 7. These *Études* are the only works on the album which had previously been recorded by another guitarist, though not by Segovia. However, the specific *Études* that Bream included on this album had not, at that point in time, entered into the guitar's canon and are among the most adventurous in musical language of the set.

The album, *20th Century Guitar*, was part of a deliberate effort on the part of Julian Bream to engage with modern music and also to expand the guitar's repertoire into a direction that would include works divorced from the romantic nostalgia that had characterized it. He strove to create a new guitar tradition that would be distinctly British, and worked with leading composers in Britain who were eager to utilize Bream's talent. The recording of *20th Century Guitar*, and the inclusion of modernist works into Bream's concerts, further encouraged composers in England and abroad to write new works for the guitar. Perhaps most importantly, this album (and its spiritual successor, *Julian Bream '70s*) also inspired a new generation of guitarists to explore contemporary music and to reach beyond the standard repertoire. Graham Wade, a preeminent scholar of the guitar, wrote:

Bream's recitals and records tended to bring about a new orthodoxy in the guitar repertoire, just as decades before, Segovia's band of composers laid down the basis of a player's programme. In the seventies young players of many nationalities took Bream as their mentor, imitating his selection from the

contemporary composers, but unlike him, often lacking the insight and humility necessary to project this music. Endless performances of Bennett's Impromptus, Walton's Bagatelles and even Britten's Nocturnal ousted the former dependence on the staple diet of Torroba, Turina, and Villa-Lobos, creating in its wake crises in the guitar's history as many audiences wearied of those who took new intellectualism for the only virtue.³

While perhaps the most popular works for the guitar remain those in the Spanish Romantic idiom, Bream's *20th Century Guitar* broke down the barriers imposed by Segovia's conservative tastes and allowed the repertoire to develop beyond the expectations that had previously existed. It not only provided new possibilities to performers, but also to composers, who would have previously had little hope for a professional guitarist to perform their works.

3. Graham Wade, *Traditions of the Classical Guitar* (London: John Calder Publishers Ltd., 1980), 207.

Chapter 2: Julian Bream

Julian, the Young Guitar Prodigy

Julian Bream was born in Battersea, central London, on July 15, 1933. He spent most of his early life in Hampton, a London suburb, where the Bream family lived comfortably on his father's salary as a commercial artist. Henry Bream, Julian's father, was an amateur, self-taught guitarist who played in local dance bands and whom Julian considered to be a "natural musician," despite his lack of formal training.¹ It was from his father that Julian would receive his first lessons on the guitar, and who bought Julian his first guitar when he was eleven years old. This guitar, which Julian received despite failing his matriculation exams, happened to be a Spanish classical guitar, which neither he nor his father had experience in playing. Henry and Julian took a mutual interest in learning to play this curious instrument, and began to study the classical guitar together. Though Julian had been fascinated by recordings of Django Reinhardt as a young boy—which had originally been the source of his excitement in playing the guitar—it was from a recording that Henry Bream brought home one day of Andrés Segovia playing Francisco Tárrega's *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* that Julian was inspired to take the classical guitar as his calling. To young Julian, there was a mystique to this record that inspired him for the rest of his career. In an interview at the age of 60 he said:

It's very difficult to describe the magic of that record because it was on an old twelve inch 78 record. It was a combination of this old recording and the old ribbon microphones that they would have used in those days that created a sound that was so mellifluous. It was just magic. And still, I can hear that recording, but it's the sound that is the magic. The piece is very beautiful too, but it's the

1. *Julian Bream: My Life in Music*, DVD, directed by Paul Balmer (Surry: Avie, 2006; AV2110).

sound... that grabbed me and I never looked back, from hearing that recording, to the present day.²

At the time that Julian Bream heard this recording, and for many years to come, Andrés Segovia was the undisputed leading figure of the classical guitar, without rival in fame or influence. Though Julian was hardly aware of it at the time, he would eventually come to exert a similar influence on future guitarists through his own recordings.

Julian gave his first public performance at the age of eleven on April 21, 1945, during a meeting of the Philharmonic Society of Guitarists (PSG), a local group of classical guitar enthusiasts. Here Julian impressed the group, not to mention his father, with his performance of Fernando Sor's *Study in B minor*. While the other, quite older performers seemed nervous and uncomfortable in their abilities on the instrument—which is quite understandable considering the lack of training available in classical guitar in England in the early 1940s—young Julian impressed the audience with his confidence and natural ability in performing on stage, and received a fantastic burst of applause from the audience. Julian says, “My father looked so happy and radiant at my success, I can’t tell you, and it was just like drinking a cup of tea to me.”³ This experience must have bolstered Julian’s confidence and given his father reason to believe in Julian’s musical ability, despite the limited audience for classical guitar in England.

Henry Bream was an incredibly influential figure in Julian’s development as a guitarist, and he continued to exert a major influence throughout his early career.

However, Henry Bream did not encourage his son without some hesitation. Henry was

2. *My Life in Music*, DVD

3. *Ibid.*

Julian's first teacher, yet he was reluctant to allow his eldest son to pursue such an arcane pursuit as classical guitar as a career objective. Indeed, as soon as Julian began to show signs of musical talent, his father steered him to the piano rather than the guitar, and only allowed Julian to practice guitar during his leisure time.⁴ Even after the success of Julian's first public performance for the Philharmonic Society of Guitarists, Henry Bream refused to allow Julian to pursue serious study of the guitar despite the pleading of Wilfrid Appleby, the most vocal member of the Philharmonic Society of Guitarists, to allow the young boy to flesh out his talent and pursue a career as a guitarist. Appleby believed, quite prophetically, that Julian held the ability to emerge as England's first major figure in the classical-guitar world, and he argued vehemently to allow the boy to study the guitar as his primary instrument. Despite such pleas and offers for proper guitar instruction, Henry was obstinate in his decision.

Henry's perspective was certainly understandable, given that the musical intelligentsia at the time considered the guitar an instrument unworthy of serious pursuit or interest. Henry was also affected by a widely held profound belief that no British guitarist could achieve professional status. This belief was in no small part influenced by a famous statement uttered by the eminent guitar composer, Francisco Tárrega, that "The guitar in the hands of an Englishman is almost blasphemy."⁵ He allowed Julian to continue to practice the guitar, but only insofar that he did not allow it to detract from his study of the piano. Still, Henry knew that Julian possessed an unusual talent and interest

4. Stuart W. Button, *Julian Bream: The Foundations of a Musical Career* (Aldershot, England: 1997), 17.

5. *Ibid.*, 19

for the guitar and that could not be ignored. In October of 1945 Henry set up an audition with Victor Olaf of Decca records in an attempt to procure a record deal for Julian's guitar playing. However, despite an encouraging (yet unfruitful) guitar audition, Henry attempted to hedge Julian's bets of becoming a professional musician further by encouraging him to take lessons on the cello. The guitar became, at this point, his tertiary musical instrument.

Despite his father's insistence, Julian's interest in the guitar never waned. Julian began studying piano at the Royal Academy of Music on Saturday mornings under the Junior Section program, headed by a woman known to Julian as Miss Bull. In 1946, preceding Julian's forthcoming visit to the Cheltenham Guitar Circle, Miss Bull allowed him to perform on the guitar during one of the Saturday classes. Here, according to Henry Bream in a letter to Wilfrid Appleby, the boy "championed the guitar in no uncertain manner, talked about it and demonstrated it to such good effect as to convert the opinion of his professor, and the whole class too" from their previous prejudices against the supposedly inferior instrument. Furthermore, Henry speculated, "Probably for many years the strains of the guitar had not been heard in this 'sacred place' and so Julian could be said to have re-introduced the guitar.... I wonder if anyone else has done so much to gain this end."⁶ This was the first of Julian's moments of iconoclasm that broke with previously held notions of the musical intelligentsia about the nature, scope, and possibilities for the guitar. Twenty years later, after changing the minds of countless

6. Button, *Foundations*, 22.

skeptics, Julian would manifest this pioneering attitude in opening up a new realm to the guitar repertoire with his album *20th Century Guitar*.

Breaking Away

Julian's impressive ability was evident from the very start, and his musical life was soon to take off.⁷ He gave his first public recital on February 17, 1947 for the Cheltenham Guitar Circle, which earned him much local praise. With his father acting as his manager, Julian was soon playing on broadcasts on the BBC, including a broadcast for the Spanish Section of the BBC's Overseas Service on August 30, 1947. This broadcast marked the first time that Julian was heard by an international audience, and was a further encouragement for his father to set up Julian's London debut. In December of that year, Segovia had planned to visit London. Henry Bream was able to arrange for Julian to meet Segovia on December 8 at Alliance Hall, at which time Segovia invited young Julian to play for him. During the applause for Julian, Segovia put his hand upon Julian's shoulder and said, "This boy has a natural inclination for the guitar and great promise,"⁸ and followed with a public appeal for support in launching Julian's career.

Nine days later, Julian again played for Segovia, this time at his hotel in London. Julian recalled of the event that he "gave an appalling performance"⁹ due to his nerves, but also recalls that Segovia was concerned with his musical interpretation rather than his

7. Unless otherwise noted, the discussion under this subheading is based on Button, *Foundations*, 39-43, 69-90.

8. Ibid., 72

9. Ibid., 73

technique. Despite this nervous performance, Segovia offered to take the boy with him for a year of touring in order to train him and “make him a guitarist.”¹⁰ At the time that Segovia asked, Henry Bream felt compelled to accept his offer. Julian’s career now seemed assured, after being endorsed by the world’s leading guitarist. However, Henry and several members of the PSG, realized that allowing Julian to travel with Segovia would surely result in the boy emerging as a “carbon copy” of Segovia, particularly in terms of musical interpretation and the guitar repertoire. Henry considered Julian’s development as a distinct musical talent to be paramount even from the beginning, and decided to sever Julian’s relationship with Segovia in August of 1948. Here was the first decisive step in Julian’s career that would break with the Segovian legacy, and it was made by his father. Despite the step away from his influence, as late as 1968 Julian still recalled Segovia as his mentor and model at this time in his life. He stated in an interview that, “There was even a scheme for me to travel with [Segovia] but it came to nothing—he just remained my mentor. Yes, I suppose I did copy him at that time. But gradually, by trial and error, I evolved my own style.”¹¹

At the same time as he decided to withdraw Julian from under Segovia’s wing, Henry Bream also became concerned with alleviating a problem that he already sensed: the extremely limited repertoire of concert pieces for the guitar. He accelerated efforts to remedy this problem, in part to provide Julian with more music to perform, and also to further distance Julian from Segovia’s shadow. The dearth of concert guitar pieces in the

10. Ibid.

11. Alan Blythe, “Julian Bream Talks to Alan Blythe,” *Gramophone* (July 1968): 24.

mid-1940s made the guitar revival in Britain extremely difficult. According to Julian, in a much later interview, “At the end of the war there was no music for the guitar. You couldn’t go to a music shop and buy any music.”¹² This problem, Henry realized, would prevent British audiences from accepting the guitar, and to show that the instrument had a voice outside of that of Segovia.

The PSG had already attempted to address this problem in 1929, when the group’s president, Boris Perrot, established a music library. Quite fortunately for Julian, Henry Bream was appointed the librarian of the PSG’s music library. Julian recalled that after his father took the position, “one day all of this music turned up at home at Cleveland Avenue. It was full of extraordinary pieces, most of the 19th century. It was like El Dorado, you know.”¹³ However, due to this lack of advanced guitar music available at that time, this collection remained small and contained mostly salon pieces and lacked serious concert works. While it served Julian well early in his early studies, it failed to keep up with his increasing ability.

Henry realized that in order to liberate the guitar from its state of stagnation in England, and to create a unique repertoire for which Julian would be the champion, there needed to be new works by English composers. Segovia had popularized the classical guitar and also the music of Spain by performing mostly characteristic Spanish pieces. Henry concocted a similar scheme to establish British music at the place of prominence in the guitar repertoire.

12. : *My Life in Music*, DVD.

13. *My Life in Music*, DVD.

The first part of Henry's plan was to resurrect the guitar music of earlier British composers. He had two particular composers in mind: Ernest Shand and Cyril Scott. While reviving these composers' works would not result in a huge body of new repertoire, it would provide Julian with something new to perform and begin to convince audiences that there was indeed a tradition of English guitar music. Julian began to program Ernest Shand's works on his concerts, which were met with enthusiasm from British audiences. However, because Shand had died in 1924, British guitar music seemed to die along with him. The exception was one piece, *Reverie*, by Cyril Scott. This piece by a popular British composer could have made a convincing argument about a guitar tradition in Britain. The score, however, was lost after Segovia premiered the piece unsuccessfully in 1918 and was never again unearthed.

Henry's second part to his scheme proved to be of substantial and lasting consequence for the British guitar tradition, Julian's career, and the guitar's enduring repertoire: encouraging new works to be written by established British composers. It must have seemed an outrageous prospect at the time, but Henry believed it to be necessary for Julian's career and for guitar music in Britain. Henry wrote the following letter to Wilfrid Appleby in May of 1947:

Dear Wilfrid,

...I think we need a group of new composers writing mostly in the modern idiom. At least we in Britain should try to produce our own guitar music and even if we have to work with slightly less famous composers for a while, it may be possible to attract the notice of men like Vaughan Williams if they see a more national approach to the guitar and the music we play on it. That has been the Spanish approach and it has been successful.

Terry Usher is, I believe, trying to produce some small compositions with a modern flavour. I believe he will be successful. There is also Reginald Smith Brindle. The last I heard from him, he was working on something for the guitar

and he said he would let us have it for opinion when he was through with it. Some time ago now.¹⁴

Usher was indeed the first to respond to Henry's request to write a piece for Julian. He wrote a seventeenth-century-style Suite in 1945, but this piece was not of the "modern flavor" that Bream was seeking. Usher responded with another work for the guitar, the *Sonata in A*, which, though it ultimately did not find a permanent place in the repertoire, was much more successful and remained a popular work for about twenty years. Usher's work, however, failed to live up to Henry Bream's vision for the direction of British guitar music. It was too steeped in the nineteenth-century guitarist-composer tradition, while Henry Bream envisioned a more "avant-garde approach from composers with the 'adventurous spirit.'"¹⁵ He sought a music that would break from the tradition, and that would "emancipate guitar composition from its inveterate harmonic principles: music from artists who shed the major-minor scale in their search for an opaque sound."¹⁶

Reginald Smith Brindle, on the other hand, fit the bill nicely to break with the classical guitar tradition. Smith Brindle began his fascination with the guitar while in Florence on army duty in 1944. Upon returning to the UK in 1946, he joined the PSG where he met the young Julian Bream. As Smith Brindle recalled:

I met him first when he was only 12 or 13, a boy in short trousers with a freckled face. It was to him I dedicated the *Nocturne* I was writing at that time, and I heard him play it in a Society's concert, and he included it in his first public recital at Cheltenham soon afterwards. Julian was already a much better player than any guitarist I had met, but his personality at that time was completely dominated by

14. Button, *Foundations*, 82.

15. Button, *Foundations*, 83-84

16. Ibid.

his father, who tended to take command of any situation or conversation, as was no doubt inevitable.¹⁷

Reading between the lines of Smith Brindle's comment offers some interesting information. For one thing, his comment shows that he had become fascinated by the guitar in Italy, yet it was in Britain where he encountered the most accomplished guitarist he had yet heard. This suggests that Smith Brindle must have sensed the inevitable rise of Bream's reputation and wisely made an early contribution to the British guitar canon. Smith Brindle also confirms what was already implied by Henry Bream's letters, that the boy's father took quite a heavy-handed approach in Julian's early career. He also mistakenly recalls that Julian performed his *Nocturne* at his debut recital, which conflicts with the program recounted in Stuart Button's book on Julian's early career, and with a review of the recital from the *Gloucestershire Echo*. Though Julian did not perform Smith Brindle's *Nocturne*, he did perform another British work, Usher's *Sonata in A*.¹⁸ Smith Brindle's *Nocturne* was indeed included on Julian's program at Cheltenham in 1947, but it was in his December concert, not his debut concert in February.¹⁹

The *Nocturne* was in Smith Brindle's earlier style, which changed significantly in 1949, when the composer turned to serialism.²⁰ He wrote only two solo guitar works in the dodecaphonic style: *Saraband* (1953) and *El Polifemo de Oro* (1956). While it was refused for publication by Schott, Julian Bream would later record *El Polifemo de Oro* and give it prominent placement on his record *20th Century Guitar*.

17. Reginald Smith Brindle, "Variations and Interludes (Fifty Years with the Guitar, Part I)," *Classical Guitar* 7/5 (January 1989):16-21.

18. See: Button, *Foundations*, 42-3.

19. Button, *Foundations*, 90

20. *Ibid.*, 85

The new music that emerged from Shand, Usher, and Smith Brindle allowed Julian to perform pieces that Segovia did not play. Henry Bream quite purposefully sought to create a new tradition of guitar, which would be unique to his virtuoso son, who was already receiving high praise and international visibility. Aside from their country of origin and musical complexity, these pieces stood out from the nineteenth-century repertoire in another way that would come to be quite important in the development of the twentieth-century guitar repertoire: they were not written by guitarists. This opened the guitar up to a much wider pool of fine composers, whom Henry hoped would contribute to Julian's repertoire. Though Vaughan Williams would never write a guitar work, as Henry Bream had hoped for in his letter to Appleby, many fine composers from Britain and abroad would soon expand the repertoire and allow a new "British school of guitar music" to develop for Julian Bream to perform. This not only allowed Julian to develop a career set apart from Segovia's immediate influence, but it also allowed a new guitar tradition to develop in Britain which would prove to be a crucial development in guitar repertoire's history.

Pivotal Events in Bream's Early Career

In 1947, Julian was already being publicly and privately praised, in the words of composer Terry Usher, as "the greatest English guitarist of all time."²¹ At a time when building national culture was on the minds of the English intelligentsia, Bream's importance was elevated even further. In 1947-48, Henry Bream and Terry Usher were

21. In a letter to Wifred Appleby. Button, *Foundations*, 95.

spearheading the development of a trust fund for Julian. The matter of promoting Julian's career was considered too important to be left to chance. Usher's friend Donald Pettinger, who had witnessed Julian's talents while visiting Usher, proclaimed in a letter to Appleby:

This matter therefore is no longer a family affair, but is one of national importance to the guitarists of this country, The guitar, much despised in the general aisles of music, may, in the near future, through the medium of Julian, take its rightful place in the curriculum of the Royal Academy of Music. Are we then, the guitarists of Britain, going to stand back and leave such a possibility to the whim of fate and the slender resources of the Bream family, when, if we get together, we can make it almost a certainty? I trust not...²²

The year of 1948 was a time of great change for Julian. He was becoming increasingly well known as the great hope of English guitarists, and his growing reputation paved the way for important opportunities to come to him in the near future.

In 1948, Julian began to program a significant number of works by British composers on his recitals. In a recital at Cheltenham, Julian performed music by Ernest Shand, Terry Usher, and Reginald Smith Brindle alongside mainstays of the guitar repertoire by Spanish composers Granados and Tárrega, as well as transcriptions of works by Haydn and J.S. Bach. On July 17, 1948, Julian finally made his London debut. However, rather than giving the recital at Wigmore Hall, as his father had hoped, Julian's debut took place at Alliance Hall, a much smaller and less impressive venue.²³ On this recital, Julian programmed Ernest Shand's *Premiere Concerto, op. 48* with piano accompaniment.²⁴ Julian's talent was becoming recognized, and his importance as the

22. Button, *Foundations*, 95.

23. Button, *Foundations*, 91.

24. Ibid., 99.

premiere British guitarist was becoming increasingly evident. Other successes around the time of his London debut included his first television performance and an extremely well received concert in Witney.²⁵

Another milestone for Julian occurred in November of 1948 when, after an audition with Sir George Dyson, he was accepted to the Royal College of Music without fees or an exam.²⁶ This acceptance would legitimize Julian in the eyes of the musical public and proved to be a major turning point in his development as a professional musician. As Julian recalled, things had not been going well for him prior to the audition. This was due, in part, to his father incurring a lot of debt while earning very little money, and to the emotional trauma caused by his parents' recent divorce. "Music [was] my solace," he later recalled regarding this troubling time, and this solace only made him more determined to pursue music, "come what may."²⁷ The successful audition to RCM meant that Julian would soon see a wealth of new opportunities for his own development and for fostering respect for the guitar at the university. Despite the fact that he was forced to study composition and piano rather than guitar, Dyson allowed Julian to partake in certain recitals at the college²⁸ and, according to biographer Stuart Button, can be credited with "overt encouragement and vigorous participation in launching"²⁹ Julian's career. However, the guitar was certainly not encouraged for serious study at RCM, and Julian actually felt discouraged at times. He recalled in an interview:

25. Ibid., 102.

26. Ibid., 110.

27. *My Life in Music*, DVD

28. Ibid.

29. Button, *Foundations*, 111.

One day I was seen with my guitar in a practice room. I was told to take it away and never bring it between those four walls again—[I] don't know whether it was thought the students might have demanded lessons and they had nobody to give them, or whether the guitar was just debasing the integrity of the institution. Anyway, it wasn't very encouraging. Now things are different at the College.³⁰

Despite the lack of respect for the guitar, attending RCM helped Julian become independent from his father's control and from his reliance on the PSG. His relationship with PSG became more symbiotic, with Bream's name helping the group gain in stature, and the PSG continuing to set up events for Julian to increase his exposure.

After several years of concertizing and with several more appearances on television, Julian finally performed at Wigmore Hall on November 26, 1951. Henry Bream had always believed that a recital at this hall would assure Julian's success, as well as the success of the guitar in England.³¹ Indeed, this concert was a major event for increasing Bream's exposure.

30. Blythe, "Julian Bream Talks," 24.

31. *Ibid.*, 127.

Chapter 3: The Guitar in the Twentieth Century

The Segovian Tradition: Nationalism and Conservatism

While the tuning of the guitar continues to be the same, it is an instrument for consonant music. That doesn't mean that delicious dissonance cannot be played, but there are many composers today that have used that. But not the cacophony. In a piece by a French composer, whose name I do not wish to mention, a Sonata for piano is played with the fist. But with the guitar, that is impossible. It is so delicate an instrument, so poetic, that it is impossible.

Andrés Segovia¹

At the time that Julian Bream was developing as a guitarist, there had only ever really been one successful concert guitarist in recent history: Andrés Segovia. Segovia virtually single-handedly raised the guitar to the level of a serious concert instrument, and in doing so established his own repertoire.² As the above quote illustrates, Segovia's musical tastes were particular and exclusive of modernist trends and heavily dissonant music. Thus, he created a tradition for the guitar that was quite conservative and bound by his own predilections. Before discussing how Bream's *20th Century Guitar* broke from the Segovian tradition, it is first necessary to examine the repertoire that came before and the motives behind its creation.

In early twentieth-century Spain—when Segovia was beginning to resurrect the guitar as a concert instrument—there existed only small groups of concert guitar enthusiasts in Spain, many of which were the disciples of Francisco Tárrega. This small group of composer-guitarists kept the tradition alive only insofar as a sort of monastic isolation. In fact, when Segovia wished to see Tárrega's manuscripts, Daniel Fortea, one

1. Graham Wade, *Maestro Segovia* (London: Robson Books, 1986), 73.

2. See: Graham Wade. *Traditions of the Classical Guitar*, 149, and also earlier Bream quote from *My Life in Music*, DVD.

of the late composer's pupils, denied him access.³ Segovia expressed his belief that this refusal was based on petty jealousy in his autobiography, saying "[Forte] was afraid someone else might play them better than he could himself."⁴ This denial led to fortuitous results; after this experience Segovia vowed to rescue the guitar tradition from dying in the hands of Tárrega's followers. He decided that he would do so not only by performing Tárrega's music, but also by soliciting new works from living composers who could build a substantial repertoire. Segovia said, after meeting with Forte:

I was more convinced than ever that I had to free the guitar from such jailers by creating a repertoire, open to all, which would end once and for all the exclusivity of those "inherited jewels." I thought of going to Joaquín Turina and Manuel de Falla—they were already known—and to other famous composers... I would act as their guide through the labyrinth of the guitar's technique. I would see to it that their musical ideas came to life in the instrument. I convinced myself, at that moment, that they would become firm believers in the guitar.⁵

Before Segovia's tour to South America in 1920, he found that his current repertoire was could scarcely fill two full recitals. This included pieces by Fernando Sor, Mauro Giuliani, Dionisio Aguado, selected works by Tárrega, transcriptions of music by J.S. Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, Handel, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Debussy, and arrangements of various works by Miguel Llobet, a disciple of Tárrega. Before leaving for this tour, Segovia had already begun to solicit new works from Federico Moreno Torroba, who soon responded with his *Danze* in E Minor (late to become part of his *Suite Castellana*). This was followed by two more movements, which were completed in 1926, and resulted

3. Wade. *Traditions*, 189.

4. Andrés Segovia, *Andrés Segovia: An Autobiography of the Years 1893-1920*, trans. W.F. O'Brien (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), 59.

5. *Ibid.*, 59-60.

in a relationship between composer and performer that proved to be extremely fruitful in building a guitar repertoire and establishing Torroba's name as a composer.⁶

The music that Torroba wrote for Segovia suited his taste and artistic temperament well, yet lacked variety. Scholar Graham Wade describes Torroba's guitar works in his *Traditions of the Classical Guitar*:

The compositions of Torroba are undemanding on the listener, very rhythmic, concise, with imaginative titles, and closely linked with the dances of Spanish folk music though without being too dependent on flamenco motifs. Torroba was above all, like Tárrega, a lyrical composer and his melodies, whilst not consisting of too many notes, are deeply idiomatic on the guitar. As with Tárrega, and unlike Sor and Giuliani, it is impossible to imagine Torroba's guitar music played on any other instrument. However, his work is not easy for the guitar and frequently requires true virtuosity under its smooth and unruffled surface.⁷

Torroba's guitar oeuvre is essentially comprised of miniatures and his works show a lack of significant development. Even his *Sonatina in A*, which was a groundbreaking work in its scope and seriousness, lacks development of themes and modulation. Yet, as the first new pieces to enter into Segovia's repertoire, his works represent a significant point in the evolution of the guitar repertoire.⁸

Other Spanish composers would soon closely follow Torroba's example. Compositions by Manuel de Falla (who only wrote one guitar work, regrettably), Joaquín Rodrigo, and Joaquín Turina make up a significant portion of Segovia's repertoire. Like Torroba's works, the works of these composers were written in a style that was blatantly romantic and markedly nationalistic. The guitar was seen as a symbol of the Spanish

6. Wade. *Traditions*, 152-3.

7. Ibid., 153.

8. Ibid., 154.

people and references to Spanish folk music is ubiquitous throughout. Manuel de Falla once made his nationalistic aims clear, declaring:

Our music must be based on the natural music of our people, on the dances and songs, that do not always show close kinship... Hitherto our composers have studied Spanish music only in and from Madrid; they did not travel, did not see or hear or take note of the festivals and occupations of the countryfolk... Our musicians ignored these sources of harmony, and treated Spanish music in the Italian or German manner...

The modern composer's road lies clear before him; it leads him to an undistorted perception of the folk-songs and folk-dances where they are freely manifested... You will find unconventional rhythms, boundless riches, in the wonderful guitar, played by people who have not studied music, by blind men in the streets of Andalusia who elicit from their instruments such tones as never were heard.⁹

Based on such sentiments, Segovia's concurrent rise to prominence and his aims to elevate the guitar to a concert instrument represented an ideal vehicle for creating a music that would assert the music of the Spanish people into concert halls across Europe.

Spanish nationalism and Segovia's repertoire were thus intricately connected.

Segovia was the first internationally recognized guitarist, and the guitar was the iconic musical symbol of Spain. Graham Wade, in his *Traditions of the Classical Guitar*, stated:

Segovia's music epitomized an essential part of the nationalistic discoveries, for his recitals brought together many periods of the Spanish guitar from Luys Milán's epoch onwards. Thus Turina, Torroba, Falla, and Rodrigo found Segovia a truly distinctive Andalusian identity, able to give utterance on an international stage to the validity of Iberia's rich cultural heritage.¹⁰

Despite the fact that the guitar was the epitome of Spanish music, these composers—Falla in particular—wrote surprisingly little for the guitar. They often preferred to evoke the flamenco guitar in the orchestra or piano. Perhaps, Wade suggests, they feared that to

9. Edgar Istel, "Manuel de Falla: A Study," trans. Theodore Baker, *The Musical Quarterly* 12/4 (Oct., 1926): 501-2.

10. Wade, *Traditions*, 161.

write flamenco-inspired works for the guitar would reduce the guitar in the concert hall to the imitation of another guitar style. “Before long,” Wade writes, “audiences might prefer to hear the real... flamenco guitar, rather than witnessing a gentle tribute.”¹¹ This is perhaps why Falla chose to look to France for inspiration, and to avoid flamenco imitations, in his only guitar work, *Homenaje, pour le tombeau de Claude Debussy*. This strange and limiting relationship between composers’ desire to imitate flamenco and their avoidance of the guitar led Segovia to look to foreign composers to expand the repertoire.¹²

Manuel Ponce was one of the first non-Spanish composers to write for Segovia, yet his intentions and inspiration were quite similar to the Segovia’s Spanish composers. Like the Spaniards, Ponce used the guitar to represent the folk music of his native country, Mexico. His output for the guitar was quite large, and like Torroba’s *Sonatina*, he too wrote extended works including sonatas, concertos, and variations. One of his first large guitar works was *Sonata Mexicana*,¹³ which is a prime example of folklorizing Mexican music by inserting folk themes into a European musical form.

Another non-Spaniard also responded to Segovia’s call with similar nationalistic intentions: Heitor Villa-Lobos. Villa-Lobos was unique amongst Segovia’s composers for two reasons: firstly, he had already been playing and composing for the guitar for some time before he met Segovia in 1924¹⁴; secondly, Villa-Lobos was already a recognized

11. Wade, *Traditions*, 161.

12. Ibid., 162.

13. Ibid., 165.

14. Ibid., 169-70.

composer outside of his guitar works.¹⁵ This second point, of course, could also be said of Falla, though he wrote so little for the guitar that he is not really a member of Segovia's group of composers.

Villa-Lobos, like the others who wrote for Segovia, used the guitar to invoke folk music of his native country. As Villa-Lobos' biographer Gerard Béhague writes, "the nationalist idiom of the guitar works of Spanish composers of the Turina, Torroba, and Rodrigo generation must have appeared propitious to Villa-Lobos in the development of his own nationalist credo."¹⁶ Béhague goes further to say, "his ultimate objectives were... to be a central part of the construction of the myth of musical nationalism, mingled with the concepts of the 'folk,' or 'folk music,' of 'sovereign nation,' and ultimately the 'Brazilian race.'"¹⁷ In 1966, Villa-Lobos claimed that the only composers who have value are those "who write music because they cannot live without it." He continued:

These composers work toward the ideal, never toward a practical objective. And the artistic consciousness... imposes on them the duty of making the effort for finding the sincere expression not only of themselves but of humanity. To reach such an expression, the serious composer will have to study the musical heritage of his country, the geography and ethnography of his and other lands, the folklore of his country, either in its literary, poetic, and political aspect, or musical. Only in this manner can he understand the soul of the people.¹⁸

15. Ibid., 184.

16. Gerard Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos: The Search for Brazil's Musical Soul* (Austin, TX: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1994), 139.

17. Ibid., 153.

18. Ibid.

The guitar was a natural vehicle for Villa-Lobos to invoke national folk and popular music of Brazil. Villa-Lobos made constant references to Brazilian popular music known as *choro*, and was himself a *chorão*, a performer of such music.¹⁹

Villa-Lobos guitar works, along with Falla's *Homenaje*, opened the guitar repertoire to new vocabularies of technique and harmony. Both composers looked to French impressionism for much of their inspiration, but infused their music with personal allusions to their home countries. Villa-Lobos' compositional style was rather eclectic, and some of his pieces purposefully stray from lyricism. Yet Segovia rarely, if ever, performed pieces such as Études No. 2, 5 or 7 (he did, in fact, perform No. 7 at least once²⁰), and instead programmed several his more lyrical pieces—primarily, and almost exclusively, Études 1 and 8, Prelude No. 3.²¹

Two more non-Spaniards joined Segovia's group: Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco from Italy, and Alexander Tansman from Poland. Both of these composers fit well into Segovia's lyrical ideal of the guitar and did little to push new boundaries in musical language. Castelnuovo-Tedesco was perhaps the only of Segovia's composers not bound by nationalist aims and his primary accomplishment was in extending the repertoire with works outside of the solo tradition. He wrote many works for multiple guitars and his Guitar Concerto, op. 99 was the first of its kind since the concertos of Giuliani.²²

Alexander Tansman, like so many of Segovia's composers, inserted influences of his

19. Turibio Santos, *Heitor Villa-Lobos and the Guitar*, trans. Victoria Forde and Graham Wade (Cork, Ireland: Wise Owl Music, 1985), 11-2.

20. Béhague, *Heitor Villa-Lobos*, 138.

21. Graham Wade, *Segovia: A Celebration of the Man and his Music* (London: Allison & Busby Ltd., 1983), 138.

22. Wade, *Traditions*, 176-77.

native land, Poland, into his guitar compositions such as his 1962 work, *Suite in modo polonico*. Though these two European composers were not particularly musically adventurous, they accomplished a broadening of the guitar repertoire to parts of Europe beyond Spain.

In the 1920s and '30s, there were scores of composers from whom Segovia could have solicited new works from all over Europe and the Americas: Ravel, Bartók, Schoenberg, Vaughan Williams, Chávez, and Stravinsky, just to name a few from different regions. Yet many would say that Segovia's conservative and lyrical musical impulses led him towards composers who, apart from (at least in Graham Wade's opinion) Villa-Lobos and perhaps Falla, were of lesser talent than many other composers with international reputations and higher influence. While many of the leading composers of the day simply did not write any guitar music, others wrote works that went ignored by Segovia and his followers. Arnold Schoenberg's *Serenade* of 1923 incorporated guitar into a work of chamber music, and was an early example of his experiments with serialism. Other modernist composers were excluded as well: Ernst Krenek's *Suite* for guitar and Darius Milhaud's *Segoviana* were never performed by Segovia (despite the latter's dedication to him).²³ After Frank Martin's *Quatre pièces brèves* (1934) was rejected outright by Segovia, the composer assumed the work was unplayable and never wrote another solo guitar work.²⁴

23. Ibid., 184.

24. David Tanenbaum, "Perspectives on the Classical Guitar in the Twentieth Century," *The Cambridge Companion to the Guitar*, ed. Victor Anand Coelho (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 190.

By excluding works that did not conform to the romantic and lyrical musical idiom, Segovia put the guitar in serious danger of losing significance in the modern musical world. From early on in his international career, music critics were torn between admiration of Segovia's command of the instrument and the lack of substantial repertoire. In 1938, a reviewer in *Gramophone* praised Segovia by likening him to Fritz Kreisler, while criticizing the substantiality of the works he performed:

A critic recently remarked of Kreisler that he could play Three Blind Mice and convince his audience that it was a masterpiece. This I take to be a compliment, and I would like to borrow it and convey it to Segovia, who makes these two trivial pieces by Ponce sound both interesting and charming.²⁵

In 1941 another critic, in a review of a piece by Castelnuovo-Tedesco, again acknowledged the lack of substantial repertoire in Segovia's program:

[I]t seems likely that this clever artist, like other pioneers, may suffer from a shortage of first-class music written for his instrument. This piece is a gay bit of salon music, with some toccata-like elements, and good butter-spreading of melody-and-accompaniment. Its idiom is not "modern," and it is easy to listen to in every way.²⁶

Reviewers began to view the guitar as an instrument capable only of light fare and characteristic miniatures. Another reviewer in 1950 doubted the ability of the guitar to hold up to the seriousness of a sonatina:

This is a novelty. Mostly, guitar pieces are short, and detached. A sonatina—we might call it a short suite—is unusual... the instrument sounds best in tender, meditative or gay song-like strains: and we have heard none to equal Segovia as its completely-equipped, sympathetic exponent.²⁷

25. D.W., "Andres Segovia, guitar: Mazurka and Petite Valse," *Gramophone* (March 1938): 22.

26. "Castelnuovo-Tedesco," *Gramophone* (March 1941): 8.

27. W.S.M., "Ponce, Sonatina Meridional, Andres Segovia," *Gramophone* (May 1950): 22.

This same reviewer ends his review with the recommendation that the listener “Sit back and dream,” which further contributes to the idea that the guitar’s repertoire is meant to be enjoyed passively and viscerally rather than intellectually. Another reviewer, in 1951, used similar language when he said of Segovia’s recording of Castelnuovo-Tedesco’s Guitar Concerto: “Try this light wine: it is well bottled and suitable for a summer’s evening.”²⁸

Reviews of this type, which evoking pleasant relaxation, dreaming, and summer’s evenings, continued on into the 1960s, contributing to a widespread belief that—as Segovia expressed in the quote that began this chapter—the guitar was only capable of romantic and light works. In an otherwise complimentary review of one of Segovia’s London concerts in 1963, a reviewer for *The Times*, commented, “Yet in spite of all these surface beauties and the frisson of hearing an instrument perfectly played, would it be heretical to suggest to guitar fanciers that a whole evening of guitar music hardly adds up to a satisfying concert?”²⁹ Another critic, Stephen Walsh, also wrote in *The Times* in 1960, “Segovia’s magic is to draw his listeners into a web of silence and for this only the insubstantial and elusive will suffice.”³⁰ Critics continued to be torn between Segovia’s skillful playing and the insubstantial repertoire that he performed. Another critic of the 1960s wrote, “though one could admire Segovia’s unfailing skill and finesse, . . . it seemed a pity that his time should be spent on such undistinguished material.”³¹

28. A.R. “Castelnuovo-Tedesco, Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra, Andres Segovia,” *Gramophone* (August 1951): 15.

29. Wade, *Traditions*, 184.

30. *Ibid.*, 185.

31. *Ibid.*

Segovia went on to expand his repertoire in number—with works by composers such as pieces by Joaquín Rodrigo and Emilio Pujol—but the spirit of the pieces remained the same. He never embraced modernism in his performing or recording career, and indeed played many of the same pieces repeatedly over the course of many years. The pieces that he chose became the works that comprised the tradition for all guitar players to inherit, despite the fact that critics had long been wary of the insubstantial repertoire. Those guitarists who were rising figures during Segovia's zenith wholly appropriated his tastes. Though Julian Bream began his career with the Segovian repertoire, he purposefully broke from that tradition with his public performances of works such as Martin's *Quatre pièces brèves*, and Smith Brindle's *El Polifemo de Oro*, but was most influential with his recordings on *20th Century Guitar*. It was necessary that a radical figure possess both great skill and wide acclaim in order to convincingly break from convention and open the guitar's repertoire to works that spoke in the modern language of music. Bream was unique amongst guitarists of the 1950s and 1960s in that he possessed these traits and the desire to make such changes.

Other Guitarists

When Segovia began his career, there simply were not any guitarists of his caliber and certainly no professional guitarists that enjoyed a similar reputation. However, by the time Bream's career as a guitarist began to develop there were several guitarists who were already following in Segovia's footsteps. None of these performers had as great an

impact on the guitar's repertoire as Julian Bream, yet they are worth examining in order to situate Bream's career within the tradition.

Alirio Diaz (b. 1923) was a Venezuelan guitarist and protégé to Segovia who established his career with concerts of high quality in the 1950s. Much like Segovia had done for Spain, Diaz championed the music of South America, particularly that of his fellow Venezuelan, Antonio Lauro.³² Antonio Lauro (1917-1986) was a guitarist in his own right, and like other South American composers of his generation, expressed nationalism in his works by drawing from the folklore of his country³³ Though Diaz's promotion of Lauro's music led to the composer finding a place in the guitar repertoire, the works that the composer produced were similar in language to those of Villa-Lobos, whose music was already part of the accepted repertoire.

Ida Presti (1924-1967) is regarded as one of the finest guitar virtuosos of the twentieth century. Like Bream, she was a child prodigy, giving her first public recital in 1932 at the age of eight. She developed an unusual right-hand technique, which provided her with a forceful, yet robust sound. She became especially well known for her duo with her husband, Alexandre Lagoya, and her repertoire—although it included new pieces for guitar duo—did little to modernize the language of the guitar repertoire.

After Segovia, the next great Spanish concert guitarist to emerge was Narciso Yepes (1927-1997). Like Diaz, Yepes rose in fame in the 1950s, and like Segovia, was a strong advocate for Spanish music. Yepes came to be identified with what is perhaps the

32. Maurice Summerfield, *The Classical Guitar: Its Evolution and its Players Since 1800* (Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, England: Ashley Mark Pub. Co., 1982), 91, and Wade, *Traditions*, 199-200.

33. Summerfield, *Classical Guitar: Its Evolution*, 129.

most highly regarded work in the guitar repertoire amongst the general musical public: Joaquín Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* (1939). Segovia never performed this concerto (probably because it was written for another guitarist, Regino Sainz de la Maza, rather than for him), which allowed Yepes early recording of it to earn him lasting recognition and association with the work. In 1965, he released three records of recitals, which featured the premiere recordings of several works by composers such as Luis de Narváez, Fernando Sor, and Emilio Pujol, but did not yet stray far from the language of the standard repertoire. A critic in *Gramophone* reviewed one of these recital records in language further showing the growing notion of a lack of substantial recorded works for the guitar:

A piece like Torroba's *Madroños* (also recorded by Bream and Segovia) has its fascination in the range of guitar colour, and the following *Guajiray* (otherwise unrecorded like most of these pieces) has some charming rhythmic ideas, but after a string of modern Spanish guitar pieces even so beautifully played as here one does long for something more substantial or at least more varied.³⁴

Yepes did indeed record some modern guitar music, such as Ernesto Halffter's *Madrigal*, Xavier Montsalvatge's *Habanera*, and Maurice Ohana's *Tientos*,³⁵ yet these recordings, were released in 1969, three years after Julian's Breams *20th Century Guitar*. Though these recordings came after Bream's groundbreaking recording, Yepes was still an important ally to Bream for his embracing of modern music and his premiere recordings of new works.

34. E.G. "Narciso Yepes Guitar Recital," *Gramophone* (June 1965): 59.

35. Malcolm Macdonald, "Narciso Yepes, Guitar Recital," *Gramophone* (March 1969): 73.

Chapter 4: Julian Bream and the Creation of a New Guitar Repertoire

Departures from Segovian Repertoire

Two main features characterized the guitar repertoire that was handed down from Segovia: conservative musical language and folksong inspired lyricism. Most of the pieces in Segovia's repertoire were characteristically Spanish due to the nationalistic impetus of his early collaborators. Other pieces in his repertoire were similar in style and often also based on specific folk traditions. Early in his career, Bream performed works in the Segovian repertoire, which was really the only repertoire available to him, and also what audiences would have expected. Yet he soon began to deviate from this tradition significantly, performing pieces such as Malcolm Arnold's *Guitar Concerto*; a piece that was not only by a contemporary English composer, but also purposefully avoided Spanish influences by incorporating modality (a particularly English trait) and the jazz guitar of Django Reinhardt.¹

In the 1960s, Julian Bream challenged the Segovian repertoire more directly by performing and recording pieces of a modern idiom, which were either neglected by his contemporaries or newly composed in for Bream to premiere. Segovia had simply ignored some of these pieces, such as Martin's *Quatre pièces brèves* and Villa-Lobos' *Études Nos. 5 and 7*, while Smith Brindle's *El Polifemo de Oro* was almost certainly unknown to him. Others, namely Henze's *Drei Tentos* and Britten's *Nocturnal*, were written specifically for Bream based on personal relationships between the guitarist and the composers. These pieces were more aligned with the musical realm outside of the

1. Bream, Album note to *Guitar Concertos*.

conservative guitar sphere and utilized musical languages and techniques that were unheard of in Segovia's repertoire, such as prominent, unresolved dissonances and twelve-tone technique. By adding these pieces to the guitar's repertoire, Bream aimed not only to engage with the wider musical currents, but also to create a legacy that was distinctly his own.

Origins of Bream's Choices in Repertoire

As illustrated in the previous chapter, musical critics were ready for the guitar's repertoire to offer more substantiality, and composers—even major figures of the *avant-garde*, such as Schoenberg—were equally ready to expand the repertoire of the guitar. The group that seemed most hesitant to engage with modernist idioms were the performers. This was due in large part to Segovia's influence, but was perhaps also related to the method of training available to guitarists at the time when the guitar was not offered as an instrument of study in musical conservatories.

As previously discussed², Bream attended the Royal College of Music, where he received instruction in piano and composition. While receiving his education at RCM in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Bream surely was exposed to modernist music, which at that point had existed for several decades in various incarnations. Here Bream is likely to have been free to develop his own musical tastes rather than mirroring those of a maestro, such as Segovia. Had Bream accepted Segovia's offer to become his pupil in 1947³, it is

2. See Chapter 1, under "Breaking Away."

3. Ibid.

possible that Bream's musical inclinations may have developed along more conservative lines.

Other guitarists of Bream's generation took different paths in their education. Rather than receiving musical instruction in a subject other than guitar, some guitarists sought to study with guitar maestros. Perhaps the most illustrative example in the differences in education is in the comparison of Bream and John Williams. Williams is widely considered to exist alongside Bream as the other preeminent British guitarist of their generation, yet their careers and stylistic inclinations have developed much differently from one another. Because there was no guitar program at RCM, Williams chose to receive his studies in Italy at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena under the instruction of Alirio Diaz. Diaz was certainly considered one of the finest guitarists at the time, yet he was a protégé of Segovia and had thoroughly absorbed Segovia's musical tastes and his conservative repertoire. Segovia's influence in the Accademia is also reflected by the numerous master classes that he held there over a number of years.⁴ Studying in Siena with the protégé of Segovia, Williams became a technically masterful guitarist. Yet his musical tastes have, to this day, never included music of a modernist idiom. The belief is widely held amongst many guitar aficionados that Williams' technical skill surpasses Bream's (perhaps includes Bream own opinion, who once said, "I never had extraordinary talent. I had enthusiasm and I loved music"⁵), while Bream is more musical and expressive. For instance, David Tanenbaum wrote, in *The Cambridge*

4. Harvey Turnbull, *The Guitar: From the Renaissance to the Present Day* (London: Cox & Wymn Ltd., 1974), 115.

5. Gareth Walters, "Julian Bream at 60: An Interview," *Guitar review*, no.96 (1994): 3.

Companion to the Guitar, “Bream has never been the greatest technical guitar player... but his playing is full of color, originality, and imagination.”⁶ Yet Bream is widely considered a much more influential figure due to his sense of musicality and for his contributions to the guitar’s repertoire. John Williams, on the other hand, has plainly expressed his disinterest in such an endeavor. He said in a 1993 interview, “I am not primarily interested in the problem which preoccupies many guitarists: the expansion of the guitar repertoire.” Perhaps it is not too presumptuous to say then, that although Bream’s may have received less technical instruction from a guitar maestro during his education—which may or may not have affected his technical ability—his study of music other than that in the guitar repertoire may have allowed his tastes to develop in such a way as to allow such pieces as those on *20th Century Guitar* to hold more appeal to him.

Aside from his musical education, Bream was certainly influenced by his father’s intention on building a modern, uniquely British repertoire. Henry Bream’s comment in which he wished for a piece for guitar by Ralph Vaughan Williams⁷ shows that, with *20th Century Guitar*, which finally did create a new modernist repertoire for the guitar, Julian Bream was fulfilling his father’s early intentions. Henry Bream wrote that it might help to entice composers such as Vaughan Williams to write for the guitar, “if they see a more national approach to the guitar and the music we play on it. That has been the Spanish approach and it has been successful.” Clearly Henry Bream had noticed Segovia’s proclivity for playing pieces by nationalistic composers. However, Segovia was not necessarily building a nationalistic Spanish repertoire; he played pieces based on folk

6. Tanenbaum, “Perspectives,” 191.

7. See: Chapter 1, under the sub-heading “Breaking Away.”

songs of various other countries including Brazil (Villa-Lobos), Mexico (Ponce), and later in his career, even England (John Duarte's *English Suite No. 1*, which Segovia recorded in 1968). Duarte's suite may have been English, but it was certainly not modernist.

Bream's Recordings and the Guitar Repertoire

Julian Bream began his recording career with *An Anthology of English Song*, recorded with Peter Pears and released in 1955 by Decca Studios,⁸ but he played the lute rather than the guitar. His interest in the lute had been growing for several years, and would continue to be a part of his musical identity for many more. His first recording on the guitar came in the following year with *Sor, Turina and Falla* on Westminster Records. From this point on, until the mid-1980s, Bream recorded at least one album of guitar or lute music nearly every year, and often more. These recordings, especially *20th Century Guitar*, would prove to have a great impact on guitarists the world over.

Though it was not his first record of guitar music, it could be said that *The Art of Julian Bream*, released by RCA in 1959, was the true beginning for Bream's recording career. This record proved to be a landmark and had lasting significance. It was, for instance, his first recording with RCA, which would come to be an exceptionally fruitful partnership. More importantly, this album also marked a decisive moment in breaking with the Segovian repertoire. Certainly some of the inherited (mostly Spanish) tradition was present on the record. The works on the album were a mixture of pieces for guitar

8. See discography in Wade, 207.

and guitar transcriptions and most did little to break with the traditional guitar repertoire. The album included pieces by Mateo Albéniz, Girolamo Frescobaldi, Domenico Scarlatti, Joaquín Rodrigo, Albert Roussel (a piece entitled *Segovia*), Domenico Cimarosa, and Maurice Ravel. Though Segovia had never personally recorded some of these works, they were well within his musical realm. Bream probably recorded these pieces to appeal to the tastes of classical-guitar enthusiasts, who were expecting to hear the Segovian language. However, Bream asserted his own musical ideas and showcased his style of interpretation, which was often quite distinct from Segovia's performing style.

Alongside these crowd-pleasing pieces, there was one work on *The Art of Julian Bream* that marked a distinct deviation from the Segovian repertoire: Lennox Berkeley's *Sonatina*, op. 51. This was the first time that a professional guitarist, certainly of Julian Bream's stature, had ever recorded a piece of guitar music by a contemporary English composer. Bream surely was aware that he was recording the album for an audience that was potentially quite skeptical of modernist language, and chose carefully for his first recording of a modern British guitar work. Berkeley's *Sonatina* is a fine work of which Benjamin Britten once said, "That is very nearly a great piece." Coming from Britten, this comment carries significant weight since, as Bream later recalled of Britten, "he never had a good word for any other composer—well maybe not entirely but he was very critical of English composers in particular."⁹ This work is hardly radical compared to the wider-reaches of the musical landscape of the 1950s, and in fact did not significantly stray from the language already accepted into the guitar canon by the music of Heitor

9. Chris Kilvington, "The Guitar is the Music of the Streets: Julian Bream in Conversation with Chris Kilvington," *Classical Guitar* 11/12 (August 1993): 12.

Villa-Lobos and Manuel de Falla's *Homenaje* (though the second movement exhibits a new level of dissonance). The *Sonatina* introduced some significant compositional aspects to the guitar repertoire. First, according to the album note by Irving Kolodin, the *Sonatina* "is an endeavor to do something more extended for the guitar and its resources."¹⁰ While most of the guitar repertoire at this time was comprised of miniatures, Berkeley's *Sonatina* is a three-movement work written in the familiar style of Classical and Romantic sonatinas: a brisk opening movement in (quite textbook) sonata form, a contemplative slow middle movement, and a swift Rondo for the third movement. In this way Berkeley's endeavor to write an extended sonata mirrors the goals of composers from the mid-eighteenth century, particularly Fernando Sor and Mauro Giuliani, who wrote sonatas and overtures to mirror their musical contemporaries who were writing for the keyboard.

Another way in which the *Sonatina* represented a step towards expanding the repertoire was in its employment of newly developed guitar techniques. As Kolodin remarked in his album note:

It ranges freely to the extremes of the instrument's compass, combines the *punteado* (melodic and contrapuntal playing) and the *rasgueado* (thrumming chords) effects which have come and gone in other works with half-stops, artificial harmonics, melodies in octaves, muted broken chords, and other subtleties evolved by recent players.¹¹

Berkeley was one of the first to write such a piece for Julian Bream, and by utilizing these new techniques it is clear that he was attempting to expand the repertoire based on

10. Irving Kolodrin, Album note to *The Art of Julian Bream*, performed by Julian Bream, guitar (RCA, 1960; LSC-2448), LP.

11. Ibid.

the development of new virtuosic players. John W. Duarte, a British guitar composer in his own right, saw the inclusion of Berkeley's *Sonatina* on the album as a step in the right direction, commenting that the work "does... break new ground and this is too seldom done in a worthwhile fashion."¹²

As can be seen from Bream's recitals from 1958, at the time that he was recording *The Art of Julian Bream*, he was already familiar with several contemporary works by another English composer, Reginald Smith Brindle. One of these works was *El Polifemo de Oro*, which Bream had programmed (under the title *Four Fragments for Guitar*) on a concert at Sidney Sussex College Musical Society on May 7 of 1958, and again at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge, on November 16 in the same year.¹³ According to Smith Brindle, Bream first heard the work just after its completion (presumably in 1957), while visiting the composer in Florence. When Smith Brindle played *El Polifemo de Oro* for him, Bream found "its musical language unfamiliar, yet he showed considerable interest in it, and wanted to know all about the compositional technique. He even said he liked it."¹⁴ Though Bream was intrigued by the work and had included it on his concerts he chose not to record the piece until 1966, on *20th Century Guitar*. This choice was probably fortuitous, since *El Polifemo de Oro* would have significantly challenged guitar audiences at the time, for whom dodecaphonic music for the guitar seemed an incongruity.

12. Graham Wade. *The Art of Julian Bream* (Blaydon on Tyne, U.K.: Ashley Mark Publishing Co., 2008), 94.

13. See concert programs listed in: Wade, *Art of Julian Bream*, 50, 53.

14. Smith Brindle, "Variations and Interludes (Part 1)," 21.

After *The Art of Julian Bream*, Bream's next album again featured a work by a contemporary British composer, though this time it was a concerto. *Guitar Concertos*, released by RCA in 1960, was comprised of only two works. The first work was Mauro Guilini's Concerto in A, op. 30, which, though it premiered in 1808 and represented the first virtuosic guitar concerto,¹⁵ was virtually unknown at the time of the album's release.¹⁶ More importantly, this was the premiere recording of Malcolm Arnold's Guitar Concerto, op. 67, a work written for Julian Bream. The harmonic and melodic language of Arnold's concerto is rather conservative, and critics of the concerto were concerned that the work was a pastiche of styles. Critic Carl Miller wrote in *Guitar Review*:

Mr. Arnold's Concerto is a salade [*sic*] of certain modern rhythmic twists, sentimental melodies, blues, modal harmonies and other unrelated elements. Its diversity may appeal to some. I find it a curious recipe of indigestible ingredients... Bream serves the composer well. He throws himself into the music as if it were Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto* for guitar. Too bad it is not.¹⁷

This review, though quite negative, reveals some of the most salient features of the work. The work does indeed indulge in a variety of musical influences. However, this reviewer perhaps failed to take note of a particular musical influence that was absent: Spanish Romanticism. As Bream reveals in his album note to *Guitar Concertos*:

Fully aware that Spain is traditionally the "spiritual home" of the guitar, Arnold has deliberately decided to give the instrument a more universal character. He has successfully circumvented the Spanish "overtone" of the instrument by a subtle use of modal melodic material.¹⁸

15. According to: Julian Bream, Album note to *Guitar Concertos*, performed by Julian Bream, guitar (RCA, 1960; LSC-2487), LP.

16. Wade, *Art of Julian Bream*, 95.

17. Ibid.

18. Bream, Album note to *Guitar Concertos*.

Thus, it is clear that Arnold played a role in the break with the Segovian tradition, a concept that had been so important to Henry Bream and to Julian's development as an individual artist.

In Carl Miller's review of Arnold's concerto, he notes several of the "indigestible ingredients" to which he objected. These ingredients—modern rhythmic twists, sentimental melodies, blues, and modal harmonies—are all elements that could be applied to his example for comparison: Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto*. Perhaps the issue Miller takes with Arnold's work is that it does not go far enough in any direction. Yet this lack of clear modernistic direction very well could have been intentional. Bream describes in his album note:

In an age when, in search of new forms and techniques, composers are willfully avoiding the traditional language of music, it is always refreshing to find one who writes for the sheer joy of giving pleasure to others, without sacrificing either his art or integrity. Malcolm Arnold is one such composer...¹⁹

Arnold's *Guitar Concerto* seems to have not been designed to fit a modernist manifesto, but rather to appeal to guitar audiences' (rather conservative) musical tastes. It would be another six years before Bream would record solo works that were intended to introduce more challenging language to guitar audiences.

Three years after *Guitar Concertos*, Bream teamed up again with Peter Pears to release the album *Music for Voice and Guitar* on RCA. This album was comprised entirely of songs by British composers: Benjamin Britten (who was, of course, Peter Pears's life partner), William Walton, Mátyás Seiber (who was Hungarian born but spent most of his life in England), and Peter Racine Fricker. The Britten and Walton works are

19. Bream, Album note to *Guitar Concertos*.

challenging indeed, and undoubtedly represent works in the British modernist idiom. However, by the 1960s there was already a long legacy of modernist vocal works, and for the language of these songs to have been dictated by the public's taste for the repertoire of the accompaniment instrument would have surely resulted in anachronism. While these are interesting works in their own right, they do not represent repertoire for the solo guitar, and their influence on expanding the guitar's repertoire is difficult to gauge. Still they show Bream's willingness and ability to embrace new works that were musically and technically challenging.

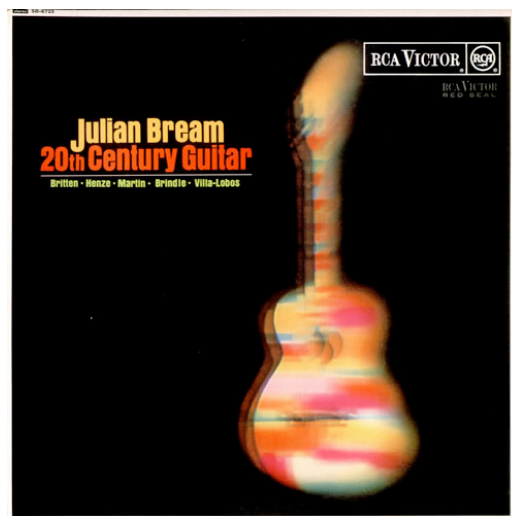
Bream's next album, *Julian Bream*, again featured a work by Benjamin Britten: *Courtly Dances* from *Gloriana*, which Bream arranged for his Julian Bream Consort (in which he played the lute, not the guitar). These pieces were written in the style of Elizabethan dance music and are hardly modernistic. Though these dances were by a contemporary English composer, they failed to hold any real significance upon the repertoire of the guitar.

Bream's next three records featured music of the Renaissance and Baroque eras and it was not until 1966 that he was to record another contemporary guitar piece. Finally the time came when Bream released a record that would break completely from the guitar's repertoire of Spanish Romantic and Segovian repertoire: *20th Century Guitar*.

Chapter 5: The Album and the 1960s

The Album Cover

Not only was the music on *20th Century Guitar* unlike anything that Bream had released before, but so was the record cover. It featured an image of a guitar standing straight up, floating in a black background and distorted by multiple off-set layers of the same brightly colored image. The hazy effect recalls the drug-inspired psychedelic movement of the 1960s, in which images were distorted into swirling, blurry lines and vibrant, unnaturally bright colors. Psychedelia was a popular culture movement associated with the LSD-driven hippie culture. The hippies goal was to challenge social norms, and their drug-inspired imagery was reflective of the endeavor to alter their consciousness and invent new, peaceful realities. However, there is no strong association between the psychedelic hippie culture and modernist concert music, and the fact that the album cover fro *20th Century Guitar* interacted with such a movement raises interesting questions about the intended trajectory of the album.



In an essay reading meanings and social implications into cover art of Thai cassettes, ethnomusicologist Deborah Wong states that:

Depending on the identity and background of the viewer, the cassette's visual signs and symbols will enhance the auditory sounds and symbols of the music itself. . . . The images used in cassette covers are not quotations from reality, but translations, and they do indeed have 'a language of their own.' . . . They are chosen to sell a product and sum up entire trajectories of a society in a highly commercial way. They both draw from reality and create it anew, and the resulting imagined reality can be what sells a cassette best.¹

As one of her examples, Wong uses a cassette of popular music, in which the performer's music "is not only an object, but it is an object specifically designed to fit into certain commercial slots":

Everything about it, including its physical markings, point to and assert its legitimacy within the realm of contemporary music. It is authentic according to the rules of the Thai music industry because it is pinned down in matters of identity and ownership. . . . The performance is designed to be anchored in time and space by making it into an object that can be owned by many people in many ways.²

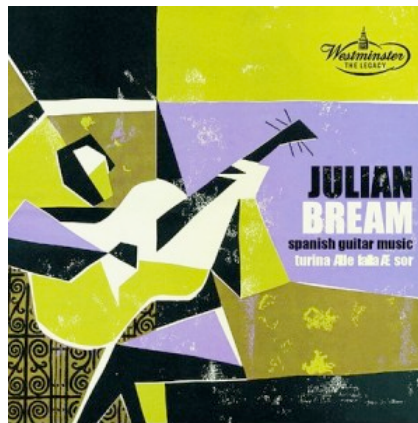
The concept of an album's cover representing a time and place within a culture and projecting the ideas generated by the images onto the music contained on the album is particularly suited to a discussion on album covers in the time that *20th Century Guitar* was released.

Before releasing *20th Century Guitar*, Bream's album covers had most often contained a photograph of Bream holding a guitar or lute along with some overlaid text. Other times they featured period paintings of lutes or Baroque music making, and on one album, *J.S. Bach Lute Suites Nos. 1 and 2* (RCA 6684), the cover featured only text,

1. Deborah Wong, "Thai Cassettes and Their Covers: Two Case Histories," *Asian Music* 21/1 (Autumn, 1989-Winter, 1990): 81-82.

2. Ibid., 96.

though in an ornate font that harkened to a much older style of printing. Only one of his previous album covers is as abstract as *20th Century Guitar*, in that it contains neither a picture of Bream nor a period painting. *Spanish Guitar Music*, released in 1956, was the first album that Bream recorded of guitar music and its cover featured an artist's stylized rendition of a person with a guitar in a manner highly reminiscent of cubism. At this time, Bream was only beginning his recording career, and he was also quite young and not at all Spanish-looking. In order to sell more copies of this record and inform the buyer of the Spanish character of the music, the record cover design featured an allusion to the style of Picasso—the most famous Spanish artist of the twentieth century—which better represented the trajectory of the album than the bright English face of the (still not quite famous) young Bream.



The major difference between this cover and that of *20th Century Guitar* is that it does not reference popular counter culture, but rather a form of “high art” and a major intellectual figure of the art world. *20th Century Guitar*, on the other hand, referenced a culture that was much more subversive.

Psychedelia and 20th Century Guitar

Barry Miles, who writes extensively on English popular culture of the 1960s, said that the sixties “began in black and white and ended in colour.” In the early sixties, he said, “The Beatles were a ‘black-and-white band’, newspapers were black and white, television was black and white,” but “late in the decade came an explosion of colour: the hippies in their velvet and lace, psychedelia, The Beatles in their *Sgt Pepper* costumes and in Richard Avedon’s psychedelic posters, rainbow printing, *OZ* magazine, posters so drenched in colour that they were unreadable.”³ One of the sources where this new color was most evident was indeed record covers. Album covers took on new meaning in the mid-1960s, as they came to be seen as an integral part of the package, and a source of visual information about the recording. According to Steve Jones and Martin Sorger in their article “Covering Music: A Brief History and Analysis of Album Cover Design,” during the mid-’60s British bands began to interact with “art school friends” on album covers, producing innovative new designs. In 1966, The Beatles released *Rubber Soul*, which was the first suggestion of psychedelia on an album cover. It featured a hallucinatory photo of the band and Art Nouveau-derived lettering. The “intricacy and visual pandemonium” of psychedelic covers, say Jones and Sorger, were “reminiscent of the music they packaged” and “were an active part of the overall musical ‘adventure.’”⁴ In light of the developments of album art around that time that 20th Century Guitar was

3. Barry Miles, *In the Sixties* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002), 1.

4. Steve Jones and Martin Sorger, “Covering Music: A Brief History and Analysis of Album Cover Design,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 11/1 (March 1999): 76–78.

released, the design of its album cover raises questions about for whom this record was intended, and how it was intended to be received.

Part of the reason for the cover may have been an attempt to engage new audiences in concert guitar music. In a 1978 interview for *Gramophone* magazine, interviewer Carolyn Nott commented that “Bream seems to have found an audience for his own playing that cuts across musical barriers,” due to the unconventional audiences that attended his concerts. Bream responded:

You have got to be as rounded as possible as a person. . . . Be aware—not too conservative. . . . The guitar has emerged as the only instrument that cuts across all forms of music. Audiences from the pop world come to my concerts because they play a few chords on the guitar and are curious to see how the instrument sounds. They wouldn’t be listening to anything else of a so-called ‘classical’ nature. Classical music becomes ‘legitimate’ to them because they can relate to it through pop. . . . Music is like a binding agent. People can relate to the guitar on a one to one basis. It is a small intimate world, the very antithesis of contemporary life.⁵

The most notable force in British popular culture of the mid-’60s was the rock band, The Beatles. Bream certainly was aware of The Beatles, as evidenced by the fact that he played a Beatles cassette in his car and sang along while being interviewed for the book *A Life on the Road*.⁶ The previously mentioned Beatles album *Rubber Soul* was not only the first psychedelic cover, but also the first instance of Indian sitar appearing on a popular-music album: the song *Norwegian Wood*. The Beatles, particularly George Harrison, created an interest in Indian classical music amongst popular music fans. Julian Bream also was interested in Indian music in the 1960s; he traveled to India in 1963 to

5. Carolyn Nott, “Julian Bream,” *Gramophone* (November 1978): 53.

6. Tony Palmer, *Julian Bream, A Life on the Road* (London: Macdonald, 1982), 28.

“replenish his spirit” and performed in the same year with famous sarod player Ali Akbar Khan.⁷ It is possible that because the guitar was already an instrument with which popular music audiences could identify, a psychedelic cover was used as a marketing tool to entice new audiences to pick up the album. But other possible answers could provide deeper meaning to the images that would have meaning to the audience already initiated into classical guitar music.

The spirit of the psychedelic artwork was to distort reality into new, freer, and more interesting forms; to take the boring “black and white” life of 1960s England and make it colorful. By making the cover seem weird and distorted, the listener anticipated music that would also be unusual. It told the listener that the old repertoire, which by the mid-’60s was becoming stale, was not going to have a place on this album. By embracing psychedelic artwork, which broke away from expectations of classical-guitar-record design, the album cover informed the listener that it was in the spirit of and interacting with a particular moment in British culture, and the record was firmly placed into its contemporary place in time rather than being stuck in the past. In short, the listener was being indirectly instructed to view the album’s musical content as a break from the tradition via a visual message on the record cover, which was completely in line with Bream’s intentions for recording and releasing the album.

7. *My Life in Music*, DVD.

Chapter 6: Reginald Smith Brindle's *El Polifemo de Oro*

Smith Brindle and Serialism on the Guitar

Reginald Smith Brindle was a composer of eclectic tastes, and several times in his career he dramatically changed his compositional approach. It is perhaps for this reason that he is primarily known today as a teacher and writer rather than as a composer. At the time that he wrote *El Polifemo de Oro* (1956), he was deeply fascinated with twelve-tone technique, though he was known to infuse his dodecaphonic works with elements of tonality. This was likely due to his belief that atonal music was incapable of completely shedding tonality. He said in his 1986 book, *Musical Composition*:

It would seem that the originators of atonality believed that their music was really completely non-tonal, but by now it can be seen that atonality is really an obscuring of tonalities in varying degrees.¹

Smith Brindle wrote a large number of works for the guitar during his career, but *El Polifemo de Oro* has remained the most influential.

Smith Brindle began composing for the guitar in 1946, when he was discharged from army duty in Italy and sent back to England. He quickly joined the PSG and became acquainted with Julian Bream, who was thirteen years old at the time of their meeting. Soon thereafter Smith Brindle dedicated *Nocturne*, his first guitar work, to Bream. This work, written in the composer's early lyrical style, quickly found a place on Julian's concert programs and earned Smith Brindle his first publication.² Smith Brindle then returned to Italy in the 1950s, where he became a founding member of the Florentine

1. Keith Duane Sullivan, "Tonality and Set-class Centricity: Structural Tendencies in Reginald Smith Brindle's *El Polimemo de Oro*" (M.A. thesis, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2000), 8.

2. Smith Brindle, "Variations and Interludes (Part I)," 18.

School of Dodecaphony. According to Smith Brindle, the members of this group, which held influence in the musical life of the city for almost a decade, were “extremists, looking down on anything which was not revolutionary, intellectual and considerably evolved.”³ During these years, he found it “difficult to reconcile the guitar with this kind of music,” and he only wrote three dodecaphonic works for the instrument: a Study in serialism (1952), a *Sarabande* (1953), and *El Polifemo de Oro* (1956).⁴ After *El Polifemo de Oro* was refused publication by Schott, and due to his inability to view the guitar as a serious instrument, Smith Brindle did not write another work for the guitar until 1970.

Despite the work’s failure to find publication, *El Polifemo de Oro* met with fortuitous circumstances. As Smith Brindle later recalled, soon after he completed the piece, Julian Bream came to visit during a short stay in Florence. During his visit, Smith Brindle played *El Polifemo de Oro* for Bream, whom responded favorably to it. Smith Brindle later reported that Bream “found its musical language unfamiliar, yet he showed considerable interest in it, and wanted to know all about the compositional technique. He even said he liked it.”⁵

Despite Bream’s championing of the work, Smith Brindle felt stifled by the guitar for some time. Just after his seventieth birthday, the composer reflected upon the problem of writing “intellectual music” for the guitar in response to a question about his compositional eclecticism. He stated:

As a matter of fact, I think in my guitar music I’ve kept to a consistent style, probably for a practical reason—because I don’t find the solo guitar itself very

3. Ibid., 21.

4. Smith Brindle, “Variations (Part I),” 21.

5. Ibid.

well adapted to music which is intellectual, that is, the contrapuntal play between voices. As soon as you get more than two voices on the guitar, I personally tend to get into a situation where I can't go ahead. Because it's too difficult on the frets, and therefore I can't carry through what my mind wants to do. That is, keep the intellectual side moving. You've got to abandon it at some point.⁶

Smith Brindle's approach to reconciling this problem was to intersperse intellectually rigorous sections with music of a freer style. In the same interview, he said:

You can't be as rigorous as you would want to be. So you've got to fall back on what the lutenists did. They did a few bars that were quite strict, and then they stopped it and went into a freer style, only coming back to the strict thing when they brought in a new theme in the fantasia, and so on.⁷

Because of this difficulty and also due to his feelings about the guitar as a romantic instrument, Smith Brindle was not able to compose for the guitar again until he began writing in a different style that he felt could better suit the instrument:

I think I realized that in my guitar writing long ago, that an intellectual approach was not on. The instrument itself has got this romantic glow in its tone. I love the tone of the guitar, so I've tended to go for that more.⁸

Julian Bream, in discussing atonal music, had much different notions about the guitar's suitability to difficult modern music. Bream posited that when it comes to atonal and serial music, "the guitar, if the music is sensibly laid out, can handle it," and continued, "But it needs a composer who really knows the instrument."⁹ Though Smith Brindle was both a guitarist and an atonal composer, Bream did not consider pieces such as *El Polifemo de Oro* to be exceptionally atonal. In the same interview he stated:

6. "Reginald Smith Brindle Interviewed by Gilbert Biberian (Part I)," *Classical Guitar* 6/5 (January 1988): 12.

7. "Smith Brindle Interviewed (Part I)," 12.

8. Ibid.

9. "Julian Bream Talking to Maurice Summerfield and Colin Cooper: Part II," *Classical Guitar* 4/7 (March 1986): 19.

For an example of atonal music by a composer who actually played the guitar—you know, I find it very difficult to find one. I suppose Smith Brindle may have been the only one who played the guitar and wrote atonal music. But in fact he didn't write particularly atonal music for the guitar, though sometimes Leo Brouwer has—and sometimes most successfully.¹⁰

Julian Bream believed that the guitar was quite capable of adequately performing serialist and atonal music in the proper hands. When Bream was asked whether it seemed perverse to perform atonal or serial music on the guitar, being that it is what the interviewer refers to as a “keybound instrument,” he responded that it is exactly this “perverse” nature of pitting the music against the instrument that can help to create the desired discomforting effect that characterized this style of modern music:

It [the perverseness of performing atonal or serial music on the guitar] can [be accentuated], yes. It can also create a musical tension. It might not necessarily be easy in itself, when you have a difficult position shift, for example.... [I]n a modern piece, the actual struggle to do it can create a certain tension which is not totally ambivalent, and in fact may add something to the overall expression. For some people that can be exciting.¹¹

What seemed a disadvantage to Smith Brindle was seen as a positive musical tool to Bream. Both men found that the guitar had an inescapably idiosyncratic character, but held opposing views on how this affected the music. While Smith Brindle believed that the guitar was unsuited for intellectual music, Bream saw an opportunity to exploit the contrast between the expectations of the guitar's capabilities and the atonal music that was supposedly beyond its scope.

Bream believed that “any instrument that has a future, that *wants* a future, has to somehow manage to tackle something in that area [of intellectually disciplined serialism

10. “Julian Bream Talking, Part II,” 19.

11. Ibid.

of the 1950s and '60s].”¹² He was concerned, as always, about the sustainability and relevance of the guitar with changing musical developments. “Whether we like it or not,” Bream said in the same interview, “it is part of the evolution of Western music” and, he continued, “an instrument that cannot handle that is traveling the byways of music.”¹³ Furthermore, Bream believed that atonal and serial music would make a healthy addition to the guitar repertoire:

I’m all for that [atonal music for the guitar], because I think that guitar music by and large is all a bit too consonant. You know, it could do with compositions of some radical nature, something a bit astringent. Not enormous pieces necessarily; ten or twelve minutes is quite long enough. Something which is not full of tricks but is a serious attempt at intellectually conceived composition.¹⁴

Yet, despite the fact that Smith Brindle was not only a serialist composer but also a guitarist, he found the guitar and this type of music incompatible.

Perhaps at the root of Smith Brindle’s opinion that serialist music is unsuitable for the guitar lies his inability to perform the music himself. Smith Brindle’s career as a writer and educator, rather than a performer, developed according to the (usually unflattering) adage that “those who cannot do, teach.” Looking back upon his career, Smith Brindle reflected:

For some time I laboured under the illusion that I could become a good guitarist, but one day I had to admit that I had no real finger dexterity, and it would be better to put the instrument aside. Instead, I discovered a great facility for writing about music, and after pinpointing where the best markets lay, I went from one success to another.¹⁵

12. Ibid.

13. “Julian Bream Talking, Part II,” 19.

14. Ibid., 20.

15. Smith Brindle, “Variations (Part I),” 19.

Another possible explanation is that Smith Brindle perhaps could not escape thinking like a keyboardist, since he began his musical training not on the guitar but on the organ. As an organist, perhaps the lack of timbral changes on the guitar, as well as its restricted freedom in polyphonic writing, seemed insurmountable difficulties. The guitar is, after all, a very idiosyncratic instrument. Neither Bream nor Smith Brindle would have argued that the guitar can perform music that was not specifically conceived while thinking of the mechanics of the instrument in a player's hands. Yet Bream considers this idiosyncratic quality to be an asset for the instrument, and considers the guitar perfectly capable of reconciling its unique attributes with atonal music. He said:

The character of the guitar is so often actually stronger than the character of the atonality of the music. But I think that's how it should be. When a composer writes well for the instrument, even in an atonal way, there's no reason why it shouldn't be well written. And sound effective. The trouble is, the people who compose at the piano and put the old loud pedal on don't necessarily write good guitar music. Atonal music on the guitar has to be very well contrived, if that's the right word. Then it *can* sound good.¹⁶

Smith Brindle was not just insecure about his own ability on the guitar, but lacked confidence in any guitar player's ability to perform his intellectually rigorous serial music. Looking back on his relationship to the guitar, Smith Brindle reflected:

Inevitably, my low estimation of guitarists as musicians made me realize that the composition of guitar music in the evolved style I had reached through the influence of the Florentine School would be a lost cause from the outset. No guitarist would be able to play my music with adequate musicality unless I simplified it, and this I was not prepared to do. So from 1957 on, writing for the guitar was never thought of. In fact, I put my instruments away in disgust, and never touched them again for 14 years.¹⁷

16. "Julian Bream Talking, Part II," 19-20.

17. Reginald Smith Brindle, "Variations and Interludes (Fifty Years with the Guitar, Part II), *Classical Guitar* 7/6 (February 1989): 35.

Curiously, at the time that he had derided all guitarists as lacking in musicality, Smith Brindle had already met the two guitarists who would become the most esteemed virtuosos of the post-Segovia generation: Julian Bream and John Williams. As discussed earlier, Smith Brindle met Bream in 1946, after which he dedicated his *Nocturne* to the young performer, and the two met again in 1957, at which time Bream became interested in performing *El Polifemo de Oro*. Yet, on both of these occasions Smith Brindle was skeptical about Bream's level of experience. Smith Brindle recalled that when he had met Bream in 1946, he was already the most impressive guitarist that he had yet encountered, but also that his personality was totally dominated by his father.¹⁸ Of their 1957 encounter, Smith Brindle recalled about Bream that "though he was a very competent player, as a musician he was still immature, with little knowledge of modern music."¹⁹ It was during his hiatus from the guitar that Smith Brindle came in contact with John Williams. Williams was quite young at the time, and Smith Brindle recalled, "though he had superlative technique, I judged his musicianship and powers of expression to be relatively superficial."²⁰ Indeed, neither of the performers had yet programmed serialist or atonal works on their recitals at that time, and perhaps they were too immature to interpret the dissonant musical style in their youth. However, only a few years later, in the 1960s, Bream began to champion modernist guitar music, and *El Polifemo de Oro* found a prominent place as the opening track of Bream's seminal album *20th Century Guitar*.

18. Smith Brindle, "Variations (Part I)," 18.

19. Ibid., 21.

20. Smith Brindle, "Variations (Part II)," 35.

El Polifemo de Oro: Soft Serialism

According to Smith Brindle's forward to the Schott 1982 edition of *El Polifemo de Oro*, the composer was inspired to write the piece by Federico García Lorca's references to the guitar in his poetry, especially the poems *Adivinanza de la Guitarra* and *Las Seis Cuerdas*, which the composer includes in this edition of the score in the original language and with his own translation. Smith Brindle's translations of the poems are as follows:

Enigma of the Guitar [*Adivinanza de la Guitarra*]

At the round
Crossways,
Six maidens
Dance.
Three of flesh
And three of silver.
Yesterday's dreams haunt them,
But they are held embraced
By a Golden Polyphemus –
The guitar.

The Six Strings [*Las Seis Cuerdas*]

The guitar
Makes dreams weep.
The sob of lost
Souls,
Escape from its round
Mouth.
And like the tarantula,
It weaves a great star
To trap the sighs,
Which float in its black
Wooden cistern.²¹

21. Reginald Smith Brindle, *El Polifemo de Oro* (London: Schott & Co. Ltd., 1982).

The guitar, according to Smith Brindle's interpretation, is portrayed as possessing occult powers in Lorca's poems, which was appealing to the composer: "This mystic power of the instrument has always cast a spell over me. It seems to possess a life of its own, a supernatural, incantatory spirit, which defies expression in words."²² He cites this supernatural quality as the inspiration for *El Polifemo de Oro*:

I have searched to express this elusive spirit in *El Polifemo*, through the intangible, fleeting sounds of the first movement, the whirling, intertwining, softly dissonant harmonies of the second, the supernatural harmonics and *tamburo* affects of the third, and the ruthless vivaciousness of the finale.²³

Smith Brindle strove to write music that would suit his feelings about the poetry. He writes about Lorca's poetry, "What fascinates me so much is the vivid, poignant power of his words, the elemental strength of his simple phrases—set out with such bold formal definition. Lorca is strong, and greatly human. I would wish my music to be the same."²⁴

The language Smith Brindle uses in discussing Lorca's poems is unusual for a work in twelve-tone style. His extolling of humanistic sentiments and elemental simplicity seem to oppose the cold intellectualism and tortured emotions usually associated with the style. Perhaps it is for this reason that the work does not strongly suggest atonality or strict serialism.

El Polifemo de Oro is unquestionably a dodecaphonic work; every movement opens with a declamation of a new tone row.²⁵ Yet there are other elements of the piece

22. Ibid.

23. Smith Brindle, *El Polifemo*.

24. Ibid.

25. This analysis, unless otherwise noted, is based on the original Bruzzichelli publication of *El Polifemo de Oro*, as opposed to the reworked version that was published

that limit the severe character one expects to find in dodecaphonic music. The most noticeable, and the element that led Julian Bream to dismiss the atonality of the work, is the construction of tone rows that suggest consonances and soft dissonances rather than harsh dissonances. While the harmony is hardly functional in any traditional sense, there are clearly recognizable triads, seventh chords, and quartal harmonies, many of which are highlighted by rapid repetition. Throughout the work there is a general sense of E as the tonal center, which is due to the reliance on the open strings—particularly that of the low E of the sixth string—and especially due to the fact that an E (usually the open sixth string) is heard in the bass at the end of each movement (See Exx.3.1-3.4).

Ex. 1 – Smith Brindle, *El Polifemo de Oro*, No. 1, mm. 1-2: In the two opening bars of the first movement the tone row (E G# F Bb B D F# C A Eb Db G) is presented:

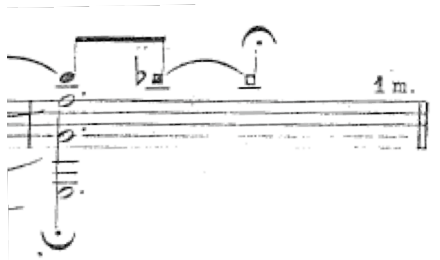
Ex. 2 – Smith Brindle, *El Polifemo de Oro*, No. 2, mm. 1-9: In the second movement, the tone row is split into two hexachords. The hexachord in the upper voice unfolds through revolving, slowly changing patterns (C# Bb D# E D C). The lower voice

by Schott in 1982. Reginald Smith Brindle, *El Polifemo de oro: quattro frammenti per chitarra* (Firenze: A. Bruzzichelli), 1974.

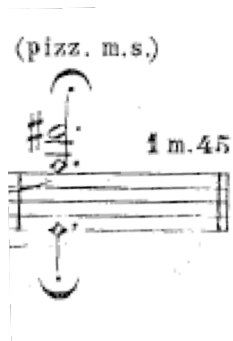
moves more slowly, unveiling the hexachord that takes up the second half of the row (A G B F G# F#):



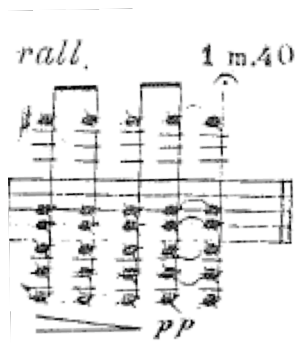
Ex. 3.1 - Smith Brindle, *El Polifemo de Oro*, No. 1 m. 12: The end of each movement contains an E as the lowest note, creating a sense of E as a tonal center:



Ex. 3.2 - Smith Brindle, *El Polifemo de Oro*, No. 2 m. 54: At the end of the second movement, not only is there an E in the bass, but also a held-over G, creating an E-minor quality:



Ex. 3.3 - Smith Brindle, *El Polifemo de Oro*, No. 3, m. 20: The end of the third movement utilizes five of the six open strings (E, A, D, G, and B) and the first string plays a G-sharp, further reinforcing E as tonal center:



Ex. 3.4 – Smith Brindle, *El Polifemo de Oro*, No. 4, m. 43: At the end of the final movement, the last three notes heard are again the low, open E string:

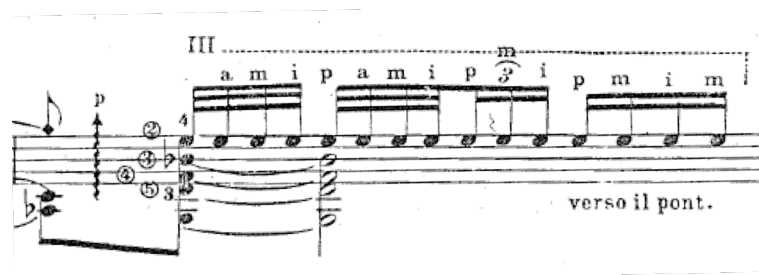


Another element that decreases the severity of the work can be understood by a method of composition defined in Smith Brindle's own pedagogical writing. In an

analysis for his 1976 Master's thesis, William Stanford recounts what Smith Brindle commented in his book *Serial Composition*, that flowing and/or vague rhythms coupled with an indeterminate or weak pulse produce relaxation in twelve-tone music, while rapid movement, "increasing impetus," strong metrical pulse, or well-defined irregular rhythms create tension.²⁶ The rhythms that Smith Brindle utilizes in *El Polifemo de Oro* are characteristically vague, save for parts of the last movement.

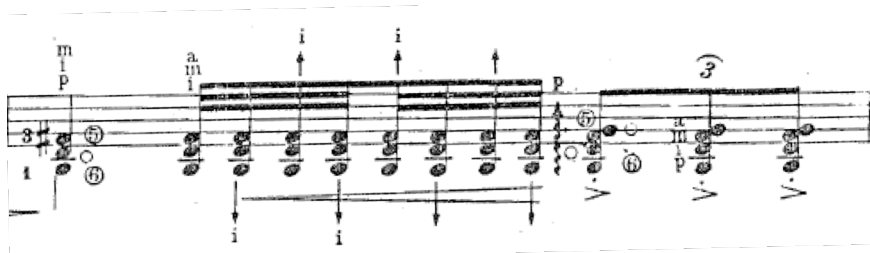
Smith Brindle also uses repetition of notes, phrases, rhythms, chords, and melodies, which sharply contrast with the serialism of a composer such as Schoenberg, who purposefully avoided repetition.

Ex. 4 – Smith Brindle, *El Polifemo de Oro*, No. 1, m. 4: The fourth measure of the opening movement shows kind of repeated-note pattern that characterizes the opening movement. The pattern of repeating a single note or a chord in this kind of measured *rallentando* becomes a characteristic rhythmic figure throughout the work. The fact that the E is repeated so early in the work contributes to the overall sense of E being the tonal center:

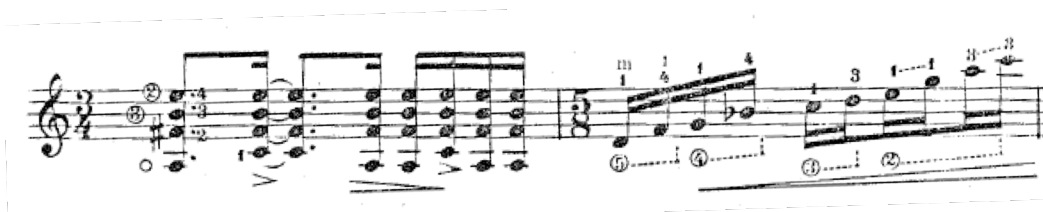


26. William Stanford, "Trends in Twentieth Century Guitar: Romantic and Modern Elements in Selected Music Written for Andrés Segovia and Julian Bream" (M.A. thesis, California State University, Fullerton, 1976), 77.

Ex. 5 – Smith Brindle, *El Polifemo de Oro*, No. 1, m. 10: Measure ten of the first movement shows the same rhythmic pattern of a measured *rallentando*, and also displays Smith Brindle’s use of triads. The fact that the triad is a B-minor chord is not insignificant; being the dominant of E minor, the repetition of this chord further reinforces E as a tonal center:



Ex. 6 – Smith Brindle, *El Polifemo de Oro*, No. 4, mm. 10-11: In the first measure of this example from the fourth movement, Smith Brindle utilizes another pattern of repetition. The harmonic content found in both of these measures shows the composer’s soft serialism. The 3/4 measure is clearly quartal, while the run in the 5/8 measure is briefly suggests D minor. It is obvious from these two adjacent measures that his serial technique is often temporarily abandoned:



It could be said that Smith Brindle’s serialism in *El Polifemo de Oro* is a rather soft serialism. By reinforcing the note E as a tonal center, he undermines the original ideas of serialism as defined by the Second Viennese School. Perhaps it is for this reason

that *El Polifemo de Oro* was well chosen as the opening track of *20th Century Guitar*. It introduces the language and ideas behind the entire album with its soft serialism, and presents difficult modernist language in a manner that would have been palpable for listeners uninitiated in modern music. Perhaps for Bream there was also a personal connection to Smith Brindle's music as the first modernist solo guitar works that he performed in concert. Indeed, perhaps Bream's introduction to *El Polifemo de Oro* during his visit to Florence in 1957 was an important moment in developing his ideas for *20th Century Guitar*. If, as Smith Brindle recalled, Bream found *El Polifemo de Oro*'s "musical language unfamiliar, yet he showed considerable interest in it, and wanted to know all about the compositional technique," and if he "even said he liked it,"²⁷ perhaps this work's prominent placement on the album reflects the importance of the work in the development of Bream's repertoire.

27. Smith Brindle, "Variations (Part I)," 21.

Chapter 7: Benjamin Britten's *Nocturnal after John Dowland*, Op. 70

A New Level of Substantiality

Britten's *Nocturnal* is widely considered one of the most substantial works in all of the guitar repertoire. Perhaps not since the Classical-era works of Fernando Sor and Mauro Giuliani has a guitar work so successfully related to musical dialogue outside of the guitar world. Benjamin Britten, more than any other composer represented on *20th Century Guitar*, was a key figure in music of the twentieth century, and the *Nocturne* interacted with several recurring themes in the composer's oeuvre: composing for a particular performer (Bream); variation form; the subjects of sleep, dreams, night, and death; and the fascination with Renaissance music, particularly John Dowland's.

The importance of the *Nocturnal* in terms of the guitar repertoire is not only based on the fact that it was written by a major composer, which alone lends more credibility to the repertoire, but also in the scope and quality of the work itself. Though it was written in 1963, it still has few competitors in terms of sheer length (lasting about eighteen minutes) and perhaps none in compositional artistry. While it is a challenge for most players in terms of musicality, Britten's *Nocturnal* is not considered one of the most virtuosic pieces in the modern repertoire in terms of technical demands. Guitarist David Tanenbaum wrote that "[o]ne of the great qualities of the *Nocturnal* is that it is not overly difficult to play; in fact, its musical difficulties are greater than its technical ones, which is a rarity in the guitar repertoire."¹ Rather than a flashy firework display, Britten's *Nocturnal* is a work that demands great subtlety and thoughtful musical interpretation.

1. Tanenbaum, "Perspectives," 192.

The language is surely modernist—for instance in the way that it is tonally ambiguous, uses conflicting simultaneous keys, lacks a recurring pulse, reconceptualizes a standard form, and looks to music of the past for inspiration—but it clearly does not subscribe to a rigorous principle such as twelve-tone technique. Instead, the modernism of *Nocturnal* is in as idiosyncratic as its composer. The inclusion of *Nocturnal* on *20th Century Guitar* is in keeping with the nature of the works previously discussed; it is modernist and challenging to the player and listener, yet it retains pleasing lyricism and aesthetic elements, which help initiate new listeners to modernist music.

Musical Elements of *Nocturnal*, Op. 70

The language of the *Nocturnal* is difficult to succinctly describe. The form clearly utilizes variations structure based on Dowland's ayre "Come , heavy Sleep," yet upon first hearing this form is difficult to discern due to the placement of the theme at the end of the work rather than the beginning. There are times when hints at tonality peek through the surface, but never is there a feeling of having settled into a key until the entrance of the theme. The musical texture is at times monophonic, especially at the beginning, but becomes increasingly rich and monodic, with a melodic line always standing out above accompanimental textures. There is also another element at the heart of this work that goes beyond musical language: a narrative built into the variation form.

Perhaps the outstanding characteristic of Britten's *Nocturnal* is the composer's use of variation structure. He was very fond of variation technique and utilized it in several ways in a number of his compositions for a wide range of instrumentations. At

times he used a more traditional variation structure, such as in *A Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, in which the original material from the theme is readily apparent throughout the variations. In other instances he used variation of a theme as a tool to unify a composition, such as his opera *The Turn of the Screw*.² In the *Nocturnal*, Britten uses a novel approach to variation structure by placing the original theme at the end of the composition, following the variations. He had previously used this technique in another work based on a Dowland theme, *Lacrymae*, Op. 48, which he completed in 1950, and then used it again in his Cello Suite of 1971.³ However, in the *Nocturnal*, Britten creatively utilized variation technique in a manner that—combined with textual elements of the work—create a narrative. One method he uses to achieve this is by assigning descriptive titles to the variations. The descriptions for each of the variations are: 1. Musingly (Meditativo); 2. Very agitated (Molto agitato); 3. Restless (Inquieto); 4. Uneasy (Ansioso); 5. March-like (Quasi una Marcia); 6. Dreaming (Sognante); 7. Gently tocking (Cullante); and 8. Passacaglia. By arranging these titles into a narrative pattern, Britten invites the listener to find a programmatic function related to the text of the Dowland ayre on which it is based. The narrative that emerges from such a reading features themes that are recurrent in many of Britten's works: sleep, night, dreams, and death. These themes can be seen by titles of some of his other works including *Serenade* (1943), *Nocturne* (1958), and *Notturmo* (1963).⁴

2. Roberto Alcaraz, "Benjamin Britten's Nocturnal, Op. 70 for Guitar: A Novel Approach to Program Music and Variation Structure" (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Arizona, 2001), 31.

3. Ibid., 34, 54.

4. Michael Donley, "Britten's Nocturnal," *Classical Guitar* 5/9 (May 1987): 18.

Britten once said of the *Nocturnal* that it “has some very, to me, disturbing images in it, linked, of course, inspired by this—the Dowland song, which of course itself has very strange undertones in it.”⁵ Indeed, it is disturbing that Dowland should set the following text, in which the poet longs for death, in a manner that is so simple, sure, and calm:

I.

*Come, heavy Sleep, the image of true Death,
And close up these my weary weeping eyes,
Whose spring of tears doth stop my vital breath,
And tears my heart with Sorrow's sigh-swoll'n cries.
Come and possess my tired thought-worn soul,
That living dies, till thou on me be stole.*

II.

*Come, shadow of my end, and shape of rest,
Allied to Death, child to the black-faced Night;
Come thou and charm these rebels in my breast,
Whose waking fancies doth my mind affright.
O come, sweet Sleep, come or I die for ever;
Come ere my last sleep comes, or come for ever.*

Such themes of death and misery are common themes in the works of John Dowland (thus the saying *Semper Dowland, semper dolens*, meaning “always Dowland, always doleful,” which actually comes from a title of one of his works), and the metaphor of sleep as an image of death is common in Renaissance literature,⁶ yet Britten found this work particularly dark. As a result, Britten created a narrative that of various stages of sleeplessness ending with a submission to sleep and death that comes as a relief to restlessness and turmoil.

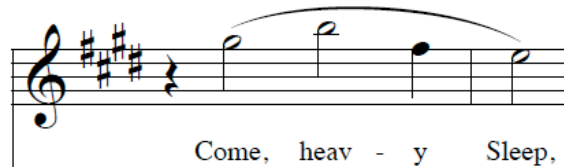
5. Christopher Palmer, editor, *The Britten Companion* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1984), 93.

6. Alcaraz, “Nocturnal,” 62.

Compositional Devices in *Nocturnal*, Op. 70

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to account for an entire analysis of the variations of this work, especially since several fine analyses have already been published, which discuss the work variation by variation.⁷ However, certain salient points merit elucidation. While each variation has unique characteristics, certain elements are found throughout. For example, the theme is never quoted directly, but parts of the theme are alluded to throughout. The opening notes of the melody for “Come, heavy Sleep,” for instance, recur in various incarnations in almost every variation.⁸

Ex. 7 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, [Theme] “Slow and quiet (*Molto tranquillo*),” mm. 1-2: Here is the upper melody from the theme as it appears in the *Nocturnal* (that is, transposed to the key of E), with the text added that corresponds to the melody from the Dowland ayre:



Ex. 8 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, I. “Musically (*Meditativo*),” m.1: The opening of the work is based on the opening melody of Dowland’s ayre. This version is

7. See Alcaraz, “Nocturnal”; Donley, “Britten’s Nocturnal,”; and Peter Evans, *The Music of Benjamin Britten* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1989), 330-33.

8. The following examples are primarily based on the previously mentioned analyses.

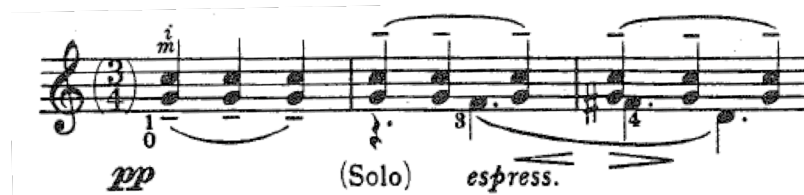
transposed, with each note of the melody up a half-step, and also features melodic embellishments:



Ex. 9 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, II. “Very agitated (*molto agitato*),” m. 1: The opening of the second variation repeats the intervals corresponding to the words “Come, heavy” (D-F-C) from Dowland’s ayre four times before finally falling to the B for the word “Sleep”:



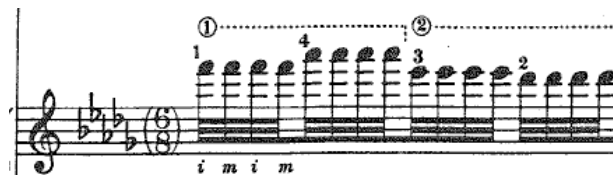
Ex. 10 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, III. “Restless (*inquieto*),” mm. 1-3: In the bass voice of the opening of the third variation, the contour of the same phrase can be glimpsed, but has undergone a change in pitch; the opening interval is now a minor second rather than a minor third:



Ex. 11 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, IV. “Uneasy (*Ansioso*),” m.1: The opening of the fourth variation retains the same intervals relating to the words “Come, heavy,” except with an added repetition of the opening pitch:



Ex. 12 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, VII. “Gently Rocking (*Cullante*),” m.1: Again, in the opening of the seventh variation, we see the intervals related to the melody on the words “Come, heavy Sleep”:



These examples are not meant to suggest that these sets of intervals are the primary focus of the work. Rather, they are meant to show one of the ways in which the work is unified, by the reference to the same thematic melodic material throughout.

Similar to the way in which he used the “Come, heavy Sleep” melodic fragment, Britten also consistently used a rhythmic fragment taken from the part of the theme corresponding to the phrase “Come and possess my tired thought-worn soul,” and adopted the conspicuous use of the perfect-fourth interval from the same section:

Ex. 13 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, [Theme] “Slow and quiet (*Molto tranquillo*)”
 mm. 11-12: This is the upper voice of Britten’s version of the theme with the
 corresponding text from the Dowland ayre added underneath. The rhythmic figure that
 corresponds to the words “and possess my” becomes a key thematic device, as does the
 prevalence of the rocking perfect fourth from G to D, corresponding to the words “Come
 and possess my tired”:



Ex. 14 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, I. “Musingly (*Meditativo*),” mm. 28-29: The
 last measures of the opening variation show the two most prominent allusions to the line
 “Come and possess my tired though-worn soul”: the rocking perfect fourth and the two-
 sixteenths-followed-by-two-eighth-notes figure:



Ex. 15 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, V. “March-like (*Quasi una Marcia*),” mm. 1-
 2: The opening of the fifth variation shows the same rhythmic figure, which becomes the
 dominant feature of this variation:



Ex. 16 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, VII. “Gently Rocking (*Cullante*),” mm. 4-8:

An excerpt of the bass line from the seventh variation, in which the interval of the perfect fourth is predominant:



Ex. 17 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, VIII. “Passacaglia,” mm. 1-3: The last variation opens with a series of perfect-fourths in the upper voice:



From these examples it is clear that Britten drew upon similar melodic and rhythmic gestures to provide unity to the work.

The last variation of *Nocturnal* is quite exceptional: it is a variation form within a variation form. The passacaglia is a device that Britten was quite fond of using,⁹ and in this instance he uses the ground bass—taken from the opening of the lute accompaniment

9. See the chapter on “Use of passacaglia in Britten’s works” in Alcaraz, “Nocturnal,” 37-42.

of Dowland's ayre—as a recurring figure between variations rather than underneath them. This ground bass remains unmoved by the changes of harmony above, recurring unaltered over twenty times, before finally breaking down, first rhythmically and then melodically. The tension caused by this obstinate bass, along with the change from slow tempo and thin texture to fast tempo and thick texture, leads to a climax that sets up the arrival of the Dowland theme. When this theme arrives, it brings a tonal stability that had been lacking throughout the preceding variations, and indeed creates a serene ending that blissfully falls into sleep and oblivion.

Ex. 18 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, VIII. “Passacaglia,” mm. 1-2: The ground bass from the opening of the “Passacaglia” variation, which is based on a figure from the lute accompaniment and occurs throughout the final variation:

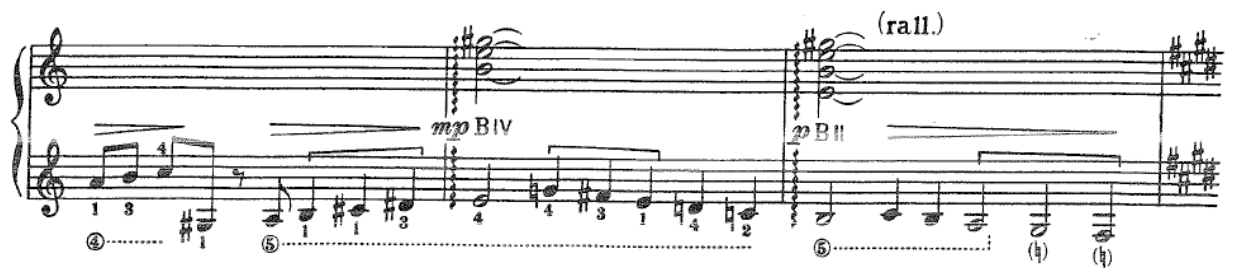


Ex. 19 - Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, [Theme] “Slow and quiet (*Molto tranquillo*),”

m. 1: The bottom line from the opening of the theme becomes an important musical element in the last variation before the return of the theme, lending a new degree of importance the figure when it finally arrives:



Ex. 20 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, VIII. “Passacaglia,” mm. 40-42: After having gone through a deconstruction and transformation, the ground bass reasserts itself in a new context; the descending hexachord finally reaches its logical conclusion by descending to E, the tonal center of the theme:



Ex. 21 – Britten, *Nocturnal*, Op. 70, [Theme] “Slow and quiet (*Molto tranquillo*),” mm. 1-4: The theme brings a dramatic release of tension. Finally, after over ten minutes of restlessness, the theme comes like a blissful lullaby. While the rest of the work had been tonally unstable, the theme is centered around the key of E major, allowing for the full resonance of the guitar to sound with the open strings:



The Influence of Britten's *Nocturnal*

In terms of scope and compositional complexity Britten's *Nocturnal after John Dowland* is unrivaled in the repertoire. Its inclusion on *20th Century Guitar* challenged audiences in a way that even the twelve-tone works could not; it asked the listener to follow subtle gestures in order to understand the work. It also opened doors to later compositions by other composers who were inspired by a work of such high caliber for the guitar, such as the *Five Bagatelles* by William Walton. Britten said, upon receiving the Aspen Award in 1964 (one year after he wrote the *Nocturnal*), that "[good music] demands as much effort on the listener's part as the other two corners. . . of this holy triangle of composer, performer, and listener."¹⁰ Bream recorded *20th Century Guitar* in order to escape a repertoire that was too focused on the shallow characteristics of guitar music. He could not have found a work better suited to intellectual, rather than purely sentimental, enjoyment than Britten's *Nocturnal*.

10. Donley, "Britten's *Nocturnal*," 18.

Chapter 8: Frank Martin's *Quatre pièces brèves*

Breaking Ground and Facing Rejection

Frank Martin is a composer who is not as well known outside of Switzerland as he ought to be, despite a successful career, a range of works in various genres, and a developed, distinctive style. *Quatre pièces brèves*, written in 1933 for Andrés Segovia, was a groundbreaking work that was almost forgotten but gained in popularity due to its inclusion on *20th Century Guitar*. It seems to be the first example of a work for the solo guitar that consistently uses modernist compositional techniques, and certainly was the first to utilize Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique to be performed by a renowned guitarist.

Quatre pièces brèves was the only work that Frank Martin wrote for the guitar. He wrote the piece for Segovia while he was staying in Martin's native city, Geneva. Martin sent Segovia the score in 1933, hoping that the guitarist would perform the work during his stay or program the work on an upcoming concert elsewhere. However, Segovia never performed the work in Geneva or anywhere else, and in fact—according to the composer's widow, Maria Martin—he never even sent a reply that he received the score or a thank-you note. When the composer and guitarist met in the street one day, Segovia greeted Martin briefly without any stop for discussing the piece that had been sent to him.¹ Due to Segovia's intense dislike for modernist music, it seems most likely

¹ Brent Poe McCabe, "A Performer's Guide and New Critical Edition of Frank Martin's '*Quatre pièces brèves*'" (D.M.A. dissertation, The University of Arizona, 2000), 13.

that he received the score and simply gave it little regard. The score has never been found, which suggests that Segovia felt no need to even preserve the piece for posterity.

As a reaction to Segovia's passive dismissal, Martin likely assumed that the work was unplayable on the guitar. Rather than letting the musical material go to waste, he quickly created a piano version of *Quatre pièces brèves*, which he performed in the same year. Martin also created an orchestral version, which he re-titled as *Guitare*, which received its premiere in the following year. Strangely, even though the original version was for the guitar, the official guitar premiere did not come until some time later, in 1947.² The premiere recording was on *20th Century Guitar*.

Martin's Reshaping of Serialism

The language of *Quatre pièces brèves* is similar to Smith Brindle's *El Polifemo de Oro*, in that it uses the twelve-tone composition technique, but in a personalized way that allows for suggestions of tonality or other traditional musical parameters Schoenberg had eschewed. *Quatre pièces brèves* was Martin's first twelve-tone work, though not every movement is composed using this technique. In fact only two of the four movements were composed using the twelve-tone technique, though the inner movements utilize free chromaticism. However, it was primarily the two dodecaphonic outer movements of *Quatre pièces brèves*, along with his Piano Concerto that he also

2. Ibid., 31.

completed in 1933-34, which helped define the “tonal serialism” that biographer Mervyn Cooke described as the basis for all of Martin’s later music.³

Martin adopted serialism when it was still a new technique, though he did so in a way that suited his own method of expression. Before adopting this technique, Martin had already been composing for a number of years. However, it was with the absorption of Schoenberg’s techniques combined with his own musical identity that Martin found what he considered to be his true voice. He said:

I truly found myself very late. . . it was only towards the age of forty five [1935] that I discovered my true language. Before, certainly I, had written some works with a definite character which are either still played or rediscovered. But I had not developed a technique which was my own. For me the solution was to be in a position to become the master of total chromaticism. I had found with Schönberg an iron jacket, from which I took only that which suited me, that which allowed me to fashion my true manner of writing.⁴

Martin’s ideas about serialism were indeed individual and, in some notable ways, quite different from the use intended by Arnold Schoenberg. While Martin and Schoenberg both sensed that chromaticism had reached its limits in tonal music and that twelve-tone technique could break through this problem, Martin was not ready to throw the baby out with the bathwater by completely abandoning accessibility. His twelve-tone music remains attractive to listeners (though perhaps not to those whose tastes are similar to Segovia’s) due to his selective appropriation of Schoenberg’s principles. Martin viewed serialism as both a method of constructing order out of the “anarchy of atonality,” and

3. Mervyn Cooke, “Frank Martin's Early Development,” *Musical Times* 131/1771 (September, 1990): 478.

4. Mervyn Cooke, “Late Starter; Frank Martin Found Himself Late in Life,” *Musical Times* 134/1801 (March, 1993): 134.

something “that it is revolutionary, and so in the first place destructive.”⁵ His primary rejection was to dismiss that which could not be perceived by the listener, and he questioned whether the order imposed by twelve-tone composition could be aurally perceived:

It constitutes an order, . . . which guides the composer in his work. But is this an order which can be perceived by a listener? Certainly not. At all events, the inversion and retrograde make it impossible to recognise the series aurally. I am therefore convinced that for our musical sense, serialism can not, by itself, impart unity to a work.⁶

He further questioned the usefulness of adopting a technique that provides a sense of order to the composer, if the effect is lost on the listener:

Perhaps there is a unity which our judgement is unable to recognise? Some kind of magical unity? For the composer, there exists something of that sort: . . . when one composes, faithful to dodecaphonic laws, one has the impression of being justified, that one cannot make a mistake. . . . It is without doubt this feeling of security which produces obedience to a received law, which has led so many composers to serial music.⁷

Martin believed that twelve-tone technique was not a technique exclusive to atonal music. Instead, he said, “the feeling of a hierarchy between notes is so strongly embedded in us, that it is necessary to want to produce atonal music for it actually to happen,”⁸ and he found that he could utilize serialism and still adhere to his past musical sensibilities. The idea that serialism could be useful as a means of refining musical sensibility is key to Martin’s musical ideology. He said in one of his numerous writings on the subject:

5. Mervyn Cooke, “Mervyn Cooke Concludes His Survey of Frank Martin's Creative Life,” *Musical Times* 134/1802 (April, 1993): 198-99.

6. Cooke, “Mervyn Cooke Concludes,” 198-99

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 199.

The rules established by Schönberg can enrich our musical writing by rendering our sensibility more acute... Everyone will shape [them] according to his own temperament... [They] can mean a new enrichment, a veritable widening of our musical sensibility in directions which have not yet been properly explored.⁹

Martin found that serialism was useful in developing his own musical sensibilities, and that he learned more from the technique than simply a new method of ordering pitch classes. He discussed the specific influence that serialism had on the development of his style:

I owe much to Schönberg and his theory, while condemning them with all the force of my musical sensibility for having introduced atonal music into the world. My explorations of the series, as much melodic as harmonic, have potently exercised my musical sense as far as chromaticism is concerned, which forms a considerable part of my musical output; they have taught me to find richer and more dynamic melodic lines, harmonic progressions which ceaselessly renew themselves, expressive and unexpected movements of the bass; finally, they have taught me to set apart the melodic line clearly from the music which surrounds it, thereby giving it a considerable independence.¹⁰

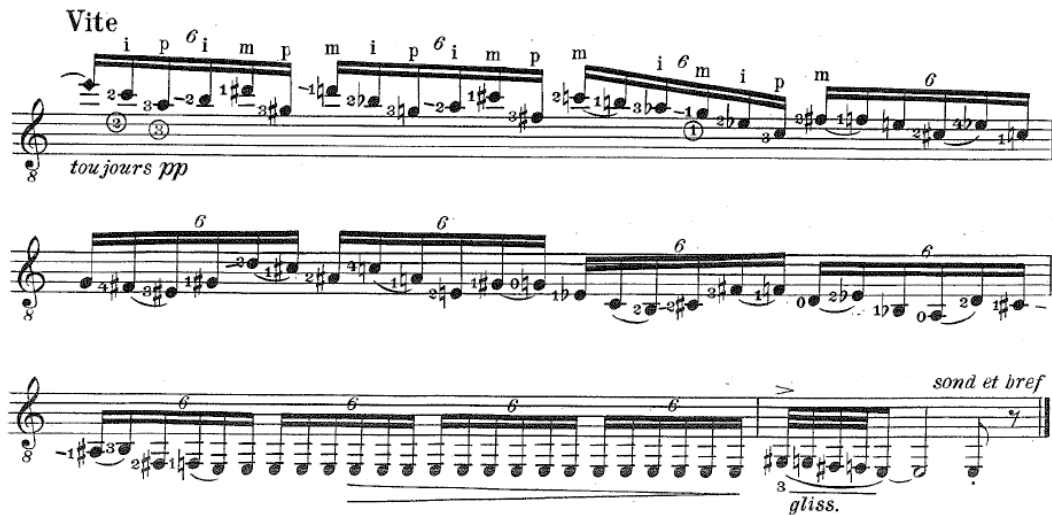
Though not all of four movements of *Quatre pièces brèves* utilize twelve-tone technique, each movement is characterized by the new sensibilities that Martin derived from exploring the possibilities of serialism. The inner movements of *Quatre pièces brèves*, entitled “Air” and “Plainte,” are lyrical works that both seem to suggest the “lament” of the third movement’s title. While they do not display serial techniques, they show a free use of chromaticism within a tonal (second movement) or atonal (third movement) context. The melodic influence of chromaticism can most easily be seen in the final section of the third movement, marked “Vite,” in which a nearly complete tone row (only missing the pitch class F) is freely used. Sometimes an entire row is present, such as in

9. Ibid.

10. Cooke, “Mervyn Cook Concludes,” 199.

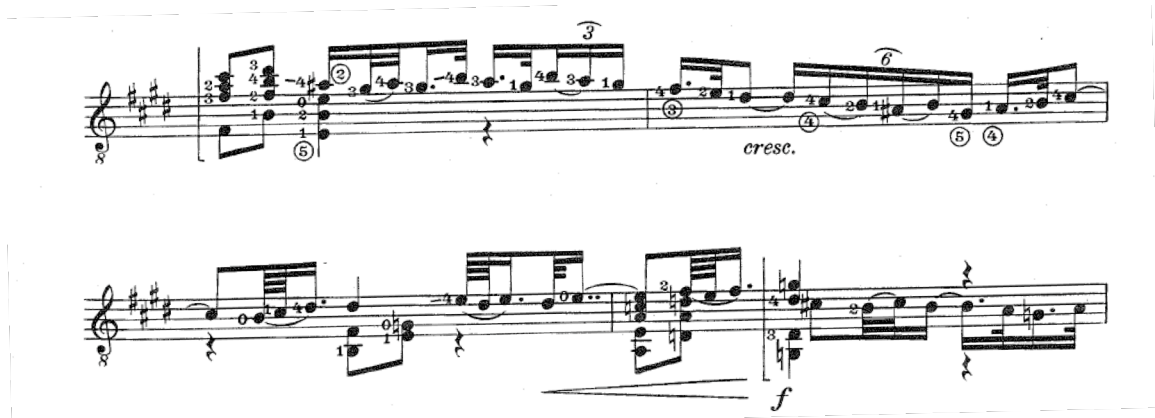
the middle line, while at other times rows are missing pitch classes or utilize repeating pitch classes, such as in the upper line (in which the note C appears several times).

Ex. 22 – Martin, *Quatre pièces brèves*, III. “Plainte,” mm. 32-34: The ending of the third movement shows the free use of twelve-tone technique in an otherwise non-dodecaphonic movement. It also displays the “richer and more dynamic melodic lines” that Martin learned from writing serialist music:



The second movement is the only one in which there is clearly a key (of C-sharp minor). However, even here the influence of serialism can be seen. Martin said that he learned from serialism “to set apart the melodic line clearly from the music which surrounds it, thereby giving it a considerable independence.” This is a strong characteristic in this movement in which the harmonic rhythm is separated into either homophonic chunks, or independent, almost monophonic melodic lines.

Ex. 23 - Martin, *Quatre pièces brèves*, II. “Air,” mm. 8-9: An excerpt from the middle of the brief second movement, showing the alternation of chords with unaccompanied melodic lines:

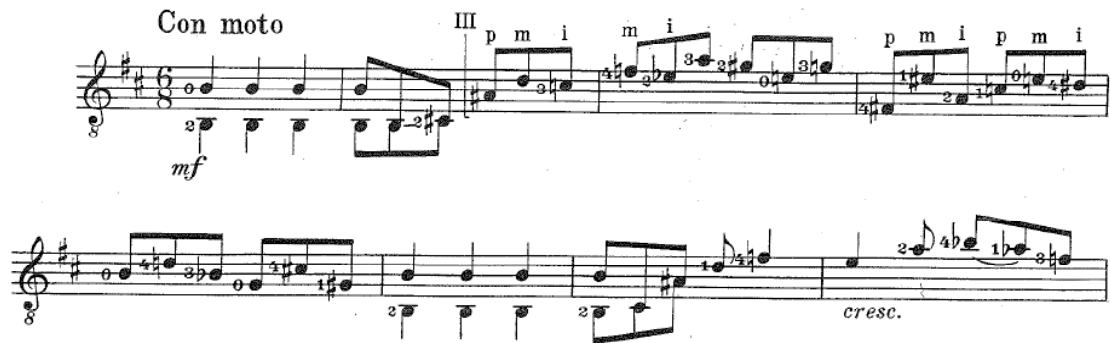


Martin’s characteristic style in his serialist works remained rather consistent from his early pieces in the 1930s to his mature style. Biographer Mervyn Cooke outlines the following musical traits as those consistent to his serialist style from the 1930s onwards:

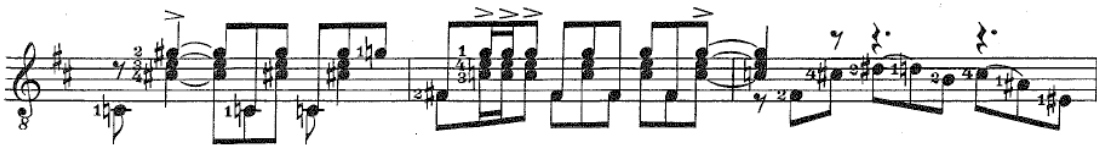
[T]he presentation of rows in even note-values, often subject to immediate transposition . . . ; canonic statements of melodic material above a free bass; use of unrelated root-position triads as a source of contrast . . . ; ubiquitous stabilising pedal points; the creation of “modulating” rows . . . ; major-minor ambiguity at cadence points; 12-note passacaglia themes . . . ; and a distinctively independent construction of bass lines to create constant dissonances underneath essentially triadic progressions.

Though *Quatre pièces brèves* was the first work he wrote using serial techniques, some of these characteristics can already be found in the piece, such as the use of even note values in presentation of rows, use of unrelated root-position triads, and pedal points.

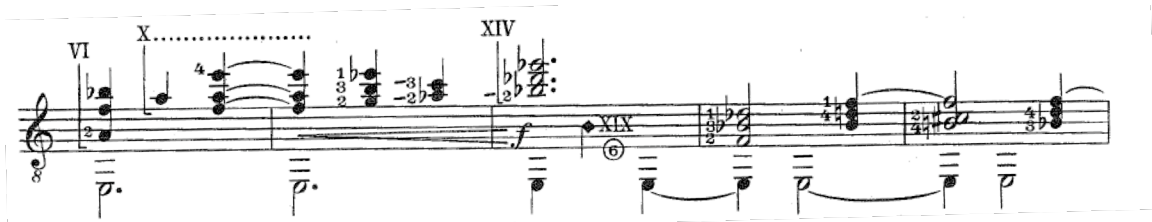
Ex. 24 – Martin, *Quatre pièces brèves* IV. “Comme une Gigue,” mm. 1-8: The opening of the fourth movement shows even note values of eighth notes just after the quarter-note figure:



Ex. 25.1 – Martin, *Quatre pièces brèves*, I. “Prelude,” mm. 26-28: This excerpt from the “Vite” section of the Prelude shows that rather than creating stability, the pedal points can be intensely dissonant with the triads above. Therefore, they perhaps reflect the way Martin also uses bass notes that “create dissonances underneath essentially triadic progressions”:



Ex. 25.2 – Martin, *Quatre pièces brèves*, IV. “Comme une Gigue,” mm. 56-60: Another excerpt from the fourth movement, which shows the use of unrelated triads and pedal points:



Significance on the Album

Quatre pièces brèves was an important work in destabilizing the dominance of the Segovian repertoire. Despite the guitarist's rejection of the work, this piece, the first of its kind to employ the modern techniques of its time to a work for the solo guitar, came to light on Julian Bream's *20th Century Guitar*, which helped propel the work into a solid place the instrument's repertoire. Like Smith Brindle's *El Polifemo de Oro*, it was a perfect piece to be included on this album; it employed modernist musical traits, while retaining aspects appealing to audiences. In *Quatre pièces brèves*, serialism is used not as a means to destroy musical tradition, but to enhance the techniques of composition with new richness. Furthermore, the fact that two of the four movements are non-serialist and quite lyrical (although freely dissonant) must have aided in making the work more palatable for guitar audiences who were less accustomed to modern musical language.

Chapter 9: Hans Werner Henze's *Drei Tentos*

Henze and Neo-Classicism

Though they are often performed as stand-alone works, Hans Werner Henze's *Drei Tentos* were originally three movements of a larger work, *Kammermusik 1958*, for chamber group, tenor and guitar. Henze wrote *Drei Tientos* just after returning from a trip to Greece, and later described the work in his autobiography:

Like the other sections of the score, these three tientos or ricercares sound as much I imagine Greek music must have sounded and are characterized by the interplay of thematic structures and harmonic textures found throughout the piece as a whole: each of them functions as a nucleus that provides material for the rest of the piece. And I think it is true to say that they contain something of what I think of as Hellenism whenever I hear Stravinsky's orchestral music or his melodrama *Persephone*. It is as though this music –music which, whenever it deals with themes from classical antiquity, invariably recalls the Baroque or Monteverdi or the Renaissance – were a gateway through which one must pass in order to establish or maintain a living relationship with classical Greece, a link with our roots, with all that is most essential in our lives, with the art of metaphor and with tragedy.¹

While Henze's compositional style is difficult to ascribe to any one modernist movement, the above quote clearly shows that Henze imparted the ideals of neo-classicism to *Drei Tentos*. He not only states that works such as *Drei Tentos* and Stravinsky's *Persephone* recall "Baroque or Monteverdi or Renaissance music," but also mentions that the "tentos" are the same as "tientos or ricercare." These three terms are basically interchangeable and describe the same type of work: a preludial or imitative solo instrumental piece from the Renaissance and Baroque eras. The terms *tento* and *tiento* are a particularly Spanish version of these types of works, which would have been played, for instance, on the

1. Hans Werner Henze, *Bohemian Fifths: An Autobiography*, trans. Stewart Spencer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 156.

Renaissance vihuela (a predecessor of the modern guitar). The term *ricercare* has enjoyed a place in neo-classicism, such as in Stravinsky's 1952 Cantata, and (like the *tentos*) signifies a relationship to the pre-Romantic models and influences on which neo-classicism was based. Henze further alludes to neo-classicism in relating of the piece to ancient Greece. He describes the pieces as Hellenistic, which can be interpreted to mean either relating to the Hellenistic period of ancient Greece, or to the nineteenth-century neoclassical movement of the same name. He also says that he wrote the pieces "as much [he] imagine[d] Greek music must have sounded" and likens them to Stravinsky's *Persephone*, a work based on Greek mythology. The goal of neo-classicism was to find inspiration for new works based on perceived models and ideas of pre-Romantic music.

Overgeneralizations about music in the first half of the twentieth century often divide works from this period into two schools: Stravinsky (Primitivism and neo-classicism) versus Schoenberg (Expressionism and twelve-tone composition). Yet this dichotomy does not accurately account for all of the musical currents that existed in the twentieth century, nor does it provide an easy home for the music of Hans Werner Henze, who utilized a variety of compositional styles including those of both Schoenberg and Stravinsky. Henze wrote *Drei Tentos* shortly after having moved to Italy, during a compositional period in which he was simplifying his musical language. While he had previously written works using twelve-tone technique, by this time he had abandoned that method, and his music became more vocally and tonally oriented. In these non-twelve tone works, Henze rediscovered an emphasis on melody and simple intervallic

relationships.² In *Drei Tentos*, intervallic relationships are the building block material on which work expands. Sometimes Henze makes use of recognizable melody, most notably in the third movement, while at other times repeated intervals create melodic interest.

Musical Elements of *Drei Tentos*

As part of a larger work, the three *Tentos* are less a self-contained entity than three separate pieces parts of *Kammermusik 1958*. Each movement has its own character and melodic material, but relates to the songs between which the *Tentos* serve as interludes. John Duarte, in an album note to a later recording by guitarist Alice Artzt, commented on the relationship of each movement to the rest of the work:

The titles of the three interludes have some relevance to the ‘messages’ of songs they separate. The first “*Du schönes Bächlein*, despite its constant change of time-signature, has a serene flow and a crystalline clarity; it bubbles and chatters its way into the guitar’s highest register – a little brook that is not deep enough to touch the guitar’s lowest depths. The second, *Es findet has Aug’ oft*, is a curious, dissonant piece gathering energy as it progresses from a hesitating and discontinuous opening; though fragmented, the middle-section offers an almost songlike line. Henze has lived in Italy since 1953 and the third *Tento* is a ‘thank you’ to his host country – as Falla’s *Psyche* was to France This last *Tento*, an amiable contrast to the second, is a sunny little work that makes use of a Neapolitan song of Henze’s.³

In the first movement of *Drei Tentos*, several intervallic relationships are used as developmental material. The movement opens with a melodic introduction, which seems to have little to do with the rest of the movement, but conspicuously uses all but one of

2. Virginia Palmer-Füchsel, “Henze, Hans Werner,” *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/12820> (accessed October 17, 2010).

3. John Duarte, Album note to *20th Century Guitar Music*, performed by Alice Artzt, guitar, Hyperion LP A66002, 1981.

the open strings of the guitar. This is perhaps an allusion to the “trying out” of the strings, which is the origin of preludial pieces like the *ricercare* and *tentos*. In fact, the term “*tento*” is derived from the Spanish word *tentar*, which means to “try out.” After this measure of “trying out” the material begins to unfold. The most prominently used interval in this movement is the major second, usually in rising motion, which is introduced in the second measure just after a melodic introduction. The rising major second between F-sharp and G-sharp becomes the most consistent and unifying musical material of this movement. After the major second is introduced, it is found in almost every following measure, and is also emphasized as the interval between the end of measures 3, 4, and 5, onto the downbeats. The rising major second is also the first interval of the next motive (A—B—F-sharp—C-sharp over F-sharp), which is introduced in measures 16-17.

Ex. 26 – Henze, *Drei Tentos*,⁴ I. mm. 1-4: The opening of the work shows a “trying out” of the strings, followed by the introduction of the major second as an important material and the F-sharp to G-sharp motive that most characterizes this movement:



4. All examples of *Drei Tentos* reproduced here are from the following edition: Hans Werner Henze, *Drei Fragmente nach Hölderlin, Drei Tentos aus Kammermusik* 1958 (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1960).

Ex. 27 – Henze, *Drei Tentos*, I. mm. 14-17. These measures from the first movement shows the continued prominence of the major second in the lower voice and also the introduction of a new motive, which resolves in the first bar of the following example:

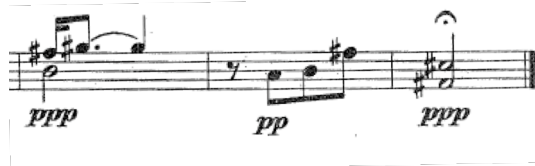


Ex. 28 – Henze, *Drei Tentos*, I. mm. 17-20: The F-sharp to G-sharp motive and the A—B—F-sharp resolving to C-sharp over F-sharp motive characterize this movement:



The music continues to develop around these materials, and though it often breaks off freely into new melodic segments, the F-sharp to G-sharp motive is reiterated very often until the end of the movement, which ends with a measure that exposes the F-sharp to G-sharp motive and then recalls the A—B—F-sharp—F-sharp and C-sharp motive.

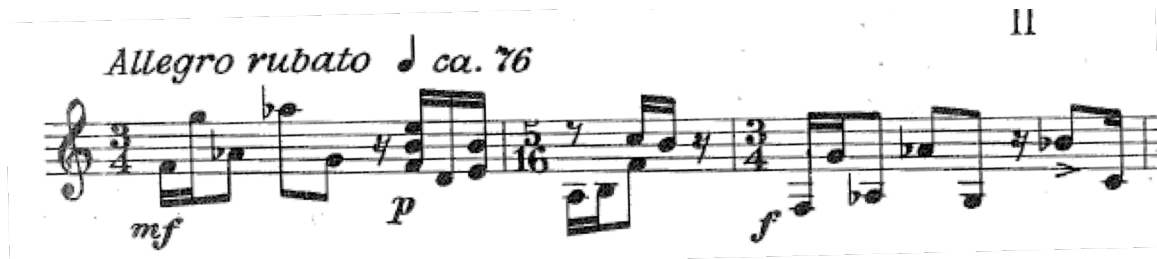
Ex. 29 – Henze, *Drei Tentos*, I. mm. 45-47: The ending measures of movement one show the use of the motives which characterize this movement:



This movement seems to suggest a center on F-sharp, but does not use any traditional tonal harmonic movement, accidentals, or cadences. It does, however, use a great deal of F-sharps, and often uses a perfect fifth between F-sharp and C-sharp on downbeats. In this movement and throughout the rest of the work, time signatures are present, but they change with great frequency. Because of this, there is no sense of recurring pulse, but rather of a phase-by-phase structure.

The second movement of *Drei Tentos* seems the most improvisatory of the three. Rather than featuring recurring intervals or melodies throughout, it utilizes ideas only briefly and then moves on to new material, creating a sense of stream of consciousness or through-composition. It is rather brief, and is the most dissonant of the three movements, which heightens the melodiousness of the third movement.

Ex. 30 – Henze, *Drei Tentos*, II. mm. 1-3: The beginning of the second movement introduces the rhythmic instability that occurs throughout:



Ex. 31 – Henze, *Drei Tentos*, II. mm. 40-41: The most striking part of the second movement is when the frantic movement suddenly comes to rest on an E-minor chord. This does not become a new tonal center for the music, nor a developing motive, but is just one musical even that is followed by another:



The third movement is by far the most lyrical of the three. Essentially, this movement is made of two juxtaposed musical ideas, one occurring after the other. While the sonorities do not feature many harsh dissonances, the composition of the piece reflects the influence of Stravinsky. It is constructed of discontinuous blocks of sound, which are created and presented next to each other without any obvious relationship between them, or transition occurring from one to the other. The *cantabile* melody is outlined in the first two measures, with an accompaniment using steady eighth notes underneath. In the third measure the second idea and new block of sound is presented. Though there is no change of tempo marked, the listener perceives one due to the sudden

shift from continuous eighth notes to continuous sixteenth notes. Henze visually separates this block from the *cantabile* that preceded it using smaller-size note-heads. The time signatures continue to change constantly, as they have done since the first movement, which also shows the influence of Stravinsky on Henze's composition. In other movements, the continuously changing meters created a sense of arrhythmia, while in this movement the changing meters function to create shifting downbeats for emphasizing phrases, giving a more natural rhythmic feel.

In the first measure, the melody outlines an E-minor seventh chord and the accompaniment of the first beat suggests an E-minor chord. Though there is no definitive harmonic movement, this opening and the ending measures of the movement suggest E minor and a tonal center. While triads are scattered throughout, most chords obfuscate a clear root using stacked fourths and fifths or added intervals of seconds or sevenths. The *cantabile* sections use chromaticism lyrically, but the contrasting sections do not utilize any accidentals and are basically pandiatonic. The lowest notes at the end of the movement seem to hint at a dominant-to-tonic relationship in E minor.

Ex. 32 – Henze, *Drei Tentos*, III., mm. 1-2: The opening of the third movement; the *cantabile* melody that opens the movement quickly gives way to the contrasting section that begins in measure three:



Ex. 33 – Henze, *Drei Tentos*, III. Mm. 35-37 The ending measures, which return exactly to the opening melody, suggest E minor as a tonal center:



Henze's *Drei Tentos* are the second to last works on the album and create a transition from the twelve-tone *Quatre pièces brèves* to the more familiar language of Villa-Lobos's *Études*. The lyricism of the last movement of *Drei Tentos* creates relief from the less-familiar language of some other works on the album.

Chapter 10: Villa-Lobos's Études Nos. 5 & 7

The Études Place on the Album

Of all of the works on *20th Century Guitar*, the Villa-Lobos Études are seemingly least like the others. The Twelve Études as a whole were highly praised by Segovia, who offered the following comments in his Preface to the first edition in 1953:

[The Études] contain at the same time formulae of surprising effectiveness for the development of technique for both hands and “disinterested” musical beauties, without didactic purpose, which have the permanent aesthetic value of concert works.

In the history of the instruments there are few master composers who have managed to combine both virtues in their “Études.” The names of Scarlatti and Chopin come immediately to mind. Both fulfilled their didactic purposes without a hint of dryness or monotony. . . . Villa-Lobos has given to the history of the guitar fruits of his talent as luxuriant and savoury as those of Scarlatti and Chopin.¹

It is interesting to speculate why Bream chose the Études to end his album of music that was otherwise purposefully breaking from the Segovian tradition. Segovia probably would never have guessed that Villa-Lobos's Études could be placed under the umbrella of a work such as Martin's *Quatre pièces brèves*, which he had utterly rejected. Perhaps Bream was attempting to add more familiar works by a composer who was already popular amongst guitar audiences in order to increase interest in the album. However, if that were the case, it seems odd that they were placed at the end of the album, and that the cover art did not highlight the pieces.

Another possibility could be that Bream was interested in being the first to record some of the Études, since the other works on the album were also premiere recordings.

1. Andrés Segovia, “Preface to the Twelve Études,” *Villa-Lobos Collected Works for Solo Guitar* (Paris: Max Eschig, 1990), 8.

After all, Segovia had only selected a few of the Études for his own recordings, Études 1 and 8, and when Bream recorded *20th Century Guitar*, few of the other Études had been recorded. However, it is unlikely that Bream was simply interested in making premier recordings, due to the fact that Bream was not the first to record Étude No. 5; it had been recorded in 1958 by Brazilian guitarist Laurindo Almeida.² Probably a more realistic reason for the inclusion of the Études is that they, too, are twentieth-century guitar works, and they actually share some musical characteristics that are in common with other works included on the album.

Musical Elements of Études No. 5 & 7

In his book, *Villa-Lobos and the Guitar*, Turibio Santos describes Étude No. 5 as “A study in contrapuntal playing where the classical guitar and the folk guitar join forces to weave a sad and distant melody.” He comments that “The intentional monotony of the accompaniment in broken thirds – resembling the *viola caipira* (folk guitar) – brings the melody (played on the treble strings) into sharp contrast.”³ While this description offers interesting insight into the inspiration for the piece, it does not comment on the musical language created by the elements it describes. The most noticeable and pervasive feature of this etude is the monotonous broken thirds that occupy the middle voice of the three-part texture. These pairs of thirds move upwards and downwards in stepwise motion in a constantly revolving pattern. The pitches of this pattern often stay static for a series of

2. Turibio Santos, *Heitor Villa-Lobos and the Guitar*, trans. Victoria Forde and Graham Wade (Cork, Ireland: Wise Owl Music, 1985), 67.

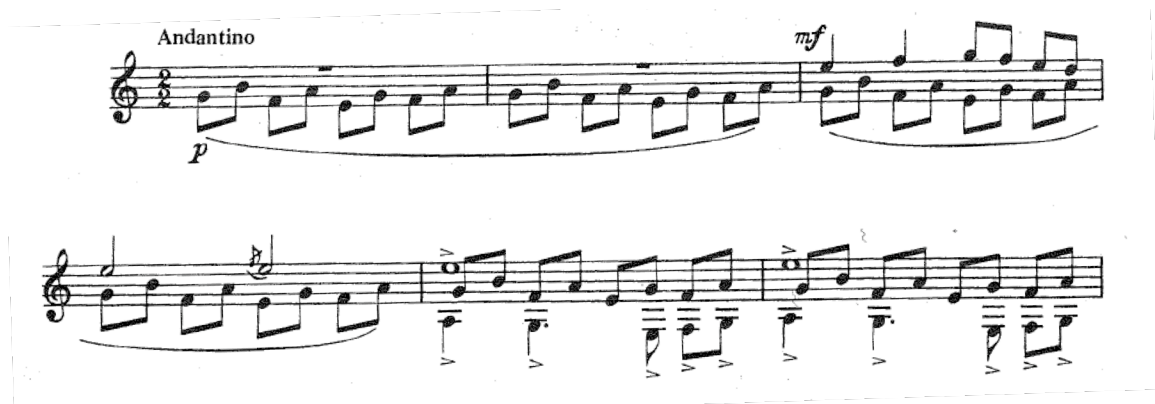
3. *Ibid.*, 24.

measures before being altered either chromatically or by transposition. These changing pitches in the middle voice, along with the longer notes in the bass, form the basis for harmonic movement in the etude. Being guided by repeating patterns of moving thirds, the resulting harmonic progressions are completely non-functional. While there is a general sense of E as a central pitch for much of the etude, there is a total lack of dominant tonic relationship, or any other chord progression that would suggest a firm cadence.

There is a sense of tonal ambiguity throughout this movement, which I believe is the salient feature in terms of relating the piece to the others on *20th Century Guitar*. Several factors contribute to the ambiguity. In the opening, E is clearly a central pitch, as evidenced by its constant recurrence in the melody. The opening seems settled in E Phrygian, and there are no accidentals outside of that mode until the twentieth measure, where a G-sharp is introduced. This alteration suggesting E major lasts only for three beats, and the last beat wipes away the sense of E major with the introduction of G-natural and B-flat. After the following two highly chromatic measures, F-sharps become consistent, which could suggest a move towards E minor, except that the note E loses some of its prominence, and the alternation of B and B-flat becomes a feature of this section. After a moment of intense dissonance and a brief return to E Phrygian, there is a double bar and a new section marked “Poco meno,” which continues to use pairs of thirds in the middle voice. This section is characterized by highly chromatic movement in the melody and bass, while the pairs of thirds, no longer stuck in revolving figures, move in less predictably than they had in the previous section. Perhaps the most perplexing

section comes eleven measures before the end of the etude, in which there is a sudden shift to C major (with only one A-flat disrupting the key) yet the melody recalls the notes of the opening E Phrygian section. Like the rest of the etude, this section features non-functional harmonic movement that offers no definitive cadence, but then ends solidly on a C-major chord.

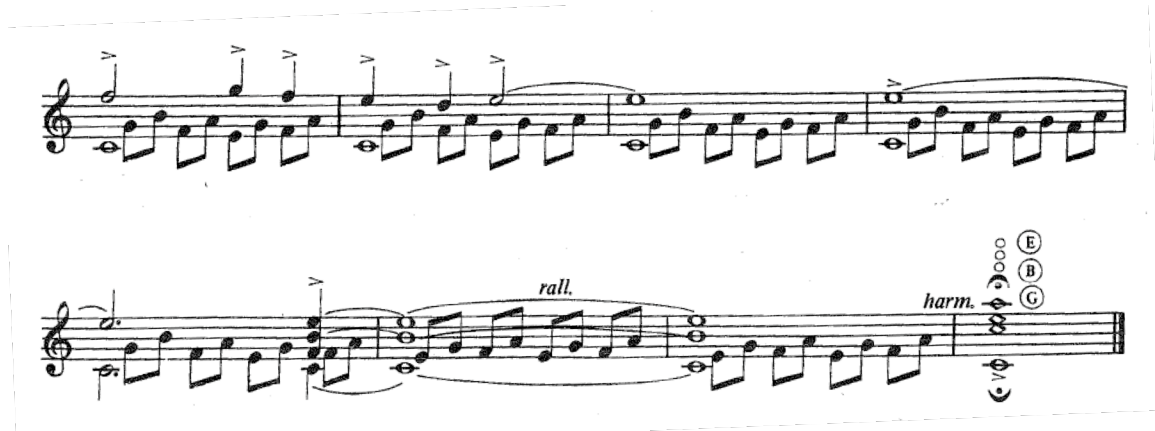
Ex. 34 – Villa-Lobos, Étude No. 5, mm. 1-6: The opening of Villa-Lobos’s Étude No. 5. The first two measures show the repeating eighth-note figure that characterizes the piece, and measures 4-6 show the main melody:



Ex. 35 – Villa-Lobos, Étude No. 5, mm. 46-48: The beginning of the “Poco meno” section, in which the melody and bass become more chromatic and the pairs of thirds in the middle-voice break from their previous pattern:



Ex. 36 – Villa-Lobos, Étude No. 5, mm. 58-65: The ending of Étude No. 5, which, like the rest of the etude, has no strong cadence:



In short, Étude No. 5 is characterized by ambiguous harmonies, constantly shifting accidentals, conjunct melodies, and a lack of tonal harmonic movement. Based on these characteristics, the work fits naturally into an album of atonal and highly chromatic works.

Étude No. 7 is not quite as easy to figure out in terms of its significance on *20th Century Guitar*. It, too, is highly chromatic, especially in the B section (“Moins”), yet it is much more clearly tonal than almost anything else on the album. One of the most noticeable characteristics of this etude are the rapid scale runs starting from pickup of E and F-sharp, and then briskly down an E major scale. These recurring diatonic scale passages, along with an E-major key signature, and a clearly dominant to tonic cadence finishing the work make Étude No. 7 much less tonally ambiguous than its partner.

Ex. 37 – Villa-Lobos, Étude No. 7, mm. 1-2: The opening of Étude No. 7 shows the descending scale figure that characterizes the A section of the piece:



Ex. 38 – Villa-Lobos, Étude No. 7, mm. 14-17: The B section of Étude No. 7 is less harmonically stable, but is still quite lyrical. This opening of the B section gives a general sense of A as a tonal center:

While Étude No. 7 is perhaps less tonally adventurous than No. 5, it is not the only tonal movement on the album (recall the second movement of Martin's *Quatre pièces brèves*). Yet there is another aspect about this piece that distinctly sets it apart from any other: it was performed by Segovia. According to Villa-Lobos biographer Gerard Béhague, Segovia premiered not only Études nos. 1 and 8 in 1947, but also No.

7,⁴ though he never recorded it. Perhaps this was meant to be a nod to the maestro; a sort of goodbye to the old tradition. It is difficult to say with any certainty.

4. Béhague, “*Heitor Villa-Lobos*” 138.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

For Bream to break from Segovia's tradition and find a new language for the guitar seemed inevitable ever since Henry Bream severed Julian's ties with Segovia in 1948. Henry Bream was also far ahead of the curve in eliciting modernist works by British composers, but the consequences were not immediately forthcoming, and several conditions had to obtain. For one thing, Julian Bream had to become a figure for whom composers would desire to write a work. This happened early in his career, as evidenced by Smith Brindle's *Nocturne* for thirteen-year-old Julian. There also had to be a demand for modernist guitar music by audiences and critics who would buy the records and concert tickets. Critics had already begun questioning the depth and variety of the guitar repertoire since the time that Segovia was creating his tradition in the 1930s, but by the 1960s, the need to create diversify the repertoire was even more acute.

Even before Bream began commissioning new works and championing modernist guitar pieces, a few had already been written and had remarkably survived despite a lack of attention (especially in the case of Martin's *Quatre pièces brèves*, which had been discarded by Segovia). However, Bream brought a new focus to modernist guitar music and made works with more adventurous musical languages seem approachable to guitar audiences. The works he chose for inclusion on *20th Century Guitar* were meant to be both challenging and understandable for listeners. Rather than choosing works such as Arnold Schoenberg's *Serenade*, or Ernst Krenek's *Suite* for guitar, both of which had received little attention from guitarists despite its being written before most of the works

on *20th Century Guitar*, Bream chose pieces that represented facets of modernist music and yet were more easily appreciated by guitar audiences.

After the success of *20th Century Guitar*, several British composers began to write seriously for the instrument, specifically with Julian Bream in mind. Several new works arose, including Richard Rodney Bennett's *Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra*, Alan Rawsthorne's *Elegy*, and William Walton's *Five Bagatelles*. Bream recorded these pieces, and also another work by Lennox Berkeley, on his album *Julian Bream '70s*. Between *20th Century Guitar* and *Julian Bream '70s*, Bream managed to record a significant number of new works in the modernist idiom, and gave a voice to British composers for the guitar. It seems that Henry Bream's wishes for the development of a new modernist guitar tradition¹ finally came to fruition, though it was perhaps later than he had anticipated.

While Spanish Romanticism continues to be the cornerstone of many guitar recitals, new works in many modern styles are written and performed from around the world. Bream's *20th Century Guitar* was remarkably influential in opening audiences to new musical tastes, which helped save the guitar from falling down the "byways of music,"² and the repertoire from suffering "ossification and stagnation."³

1. See p.18

2. See quote on p. 58 from "Julian Bream Talking, Part II," 19.

3. See quote on p. 8 from Duarte, "Julian Bream: The Contribution," 9.

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