# AN INVESTIGATION OF THE TRADITIONAL CANTE JONDO

# AS THE INSPIRATION FOR THE SONG CYCLE

FIVE POEMS OF GARCIA LORCA

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The traditional *cante jondo* is a song unique to Andalusia as it developed from the "mosaic" of cultures that have inhabited its borders, including Arabs, Jews and Gypsies. The genre expresses the history of the region, reveals the typography of the landscape and cries the tears of its people. "Deep song," the translation for *cante jondo*, is the forerunner of the flamenco, but it is a communication of a dark soul rather than an exuberant entertainment. The original folk idiom is a medium less concerned with beauty than the cathartic release of pain of every day life. It expresses the soul of Andalusia.

This study explores the history and the poetic and musical forms

Andalusian *cante jondo* as the inspiration for the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca set by Elisenda Fabregas in the song cycle, *Five Poems of Garcia Lorca* (1992).

Lorca felt the validity of "deep song" and he was disturbed that it was being corrupted by commercialism and was afraid it would be lost to posterity. His goal was to preserve the essence of the song and lift it to an artistic plain. He saw folk music as the core of the national musical and literary identity in Germany, France and Russia and worked to establish Spain as an artistic equal.

Lorca's writings were not imitations of the traditional *cante jondo*. They echoed the history, the landscape and the tears, but they did so through symbolism

and vivid imagery. The poet communicated on several levels, one as a voice of Andalusia, Spain and ultimately mankind and another with his own private message. His life was short, but his legacy is long.

Fabregas, like Lorca, has taken a folk medium and expanded it beyond its original boundaries. Being of Spanish heritage, but not Andalusian, she is less committed to the local musical constraints. She felt the humanity in Lorca's poetic cries and expressed them through her own language. As a result her songs are intensely dramatic and are exciting pieces to perform.

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by

Mary Etta Hobbs

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#### INTRODUCTION

The *cante jondo* was the song of the Spanish Gypsies of Andalusia. It is the oldest and purest version of the flamenco tradition.<sup>1</sup> Surprisingly to many Westerners, these are not songs of celebration but of intense grief. The Gypsies were an outcast people living on the outskirts of many Andalusian cities; their *cante jondo* or "deep song" was not originally intended as entertainment, but as expression of the deep-seated pain of their difficult lives. An anonymous Gitano<sup>2</sup> poet gives his definition in song.

El cante no es alegría el cante es decir las penas que se llevan escondias. Deep song is not joyfulness Deep song is uttering the sorrows That are hidden deep inside.<sup>3</sup>

This study explores the history and the poetic and musical forms Andalusian *cante jondo* as the inspiration for the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca set by Elisenda Fábregas in the song cycle, *Five Poems of Garcia Lorca* (1992). A deeper understanding of the cultural and musical context of the pieces will allow for a more compelling performance and appreciation of the work.

The examination of this work comes from without, in the sense that it is outside the experience of this author nationally and culturally, but there is an element in the *cante jondo* that touches humanity. It reaches out beyond its own bounds. "Deep song" outwardly expresses grief on an intense level which speaks to anyone who has lived a full life and has suffered.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> J. B. Trend and Israel J. Katz, "Cante jondo," *The New Grove*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Satie (London: Macmillan, 2002) V, 42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Spanish term for Gypsy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> C. Brian Morris, Son of Andalusia: The Lyrical Landscapes of Federico Garcia Lorca (Nashville: Vanderbuilt University Press, 1997), 27.

Each artistic endeavor involved in the song cycle, *Five Poems of Garcia Lorca*, expands its outreach a little wider. At the center is the *cante jondo*, the cry of the Gypsies of Andalusia. At the next artistic level, the poet was Andalusian but was not a poor Gypsy, but an educated son of a landowner. He was the bourgeois sympathizing with the people and using their symbols and forms to convey their grief as well as his own. At the third level, the composer is Spanish but not an Andalusian. The song cycle is her emotional expression through Spanish musical language of Lorca's poems of grief. It seems natural that the performer and the audience would expand the perimeter to the next level, that of humanity in general, beyond Spain. In this way, the "deep song" reaches out beyond its own limited boundaries and shows the world how to cry.

#### THE TRADITION OF THE CANTE JONDO

#### Historical and Geographical Influences

The modern flamenco has undergone an intense evolution during the twentieth century. Its roots lie in the "deep song" that was used to vent such strong emotions as jealousy, hate, rage, guilt, despair, death wish and grief.<sup>4</sup> The term cante jondo usually designates a song form, but J. B. Trend suggests that it refers more specifically to a vocal timbre that is harsh and nasal.<sup>5</sup> The genre is a song performed by a *cantaor* (singer) who can be self sufficient but is more often accompanied by the *toque* (guitar) and the *baile* (dance). These latter are enlisted to convey more fully the emotions of the text.<sup>6</sup>

It seems ironic that these cries of pain are expressed in Andalusia, home to some of the most diverse and beautiful landscapes in Spain, with miles of sea coasts, magnificent mountain ranges (Sierra de Gazalena), expansive forests and fertile river plains. As Brian Morris attests,

Anyone who has traveled in the eight provinces of the region will know the extraordinary variety of its terrain – from the "tierra seca" (dry land).... To the manicured gardens of the Generalife in Granada, from the humblest church tower to the grandiose Giralda in Seville from the mellow coastal zones of Malaga and Almeria to the harsh passes of the Sierra Morena, refuge of so many bandits in the nineteenth century. A similar diversity is offered by Andalusian culture ...[as] history, literature, architecture, paintings, music, social and religious celebrations... - show how closely interrelated are Andalusian history and culture.

The *cante jondo* reflects the surrounding terrain as well as the plight of its people.

<sup>7</sup> Morris, 6-7.

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 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Flamenco Deep Song* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 1.
 <sup>5</sup> Trend and Katz, 42.
 <sup>6</sup> Mitchell, 1.

Campesino, campesino que en la temporada de siega vas derramando el sudor desde el monte hasta la vega Peasant, o poor peasant Who at reaping time Pours sweat from the mountain to the river<sup>8</sup>

Being a beautiful habitat at the mouth of the Mediterranean, rich in natural resources, Andalusia was very inviting to both invaders and visitors. This land became a "mosaic of cultures," a veritable melting pot for musical traditions of Greek, Carthaginian, Roman and Byzantine settlers. As examples, an Islamic invasion during the eighth century brought Bagdad musician, Ziryāb, who established a music school in Cordoba causing a Persian musical presence. In the tenth century, Arabs cultivated a musical tradition in Andalusia, adding the Muslim and Jewish influence to the mosaic. In the thirteenth century, although the Spanish Reconquest was only active in the Northern provinces, Christianity was still a strong influence in Andalusia, bringing with it the Gregorian musical system. Not until the mid-fifteenth century did Gypsies become a part of the mix. In 1492, the Reconquest reached Andalusia and caused the expulsion of Jews and Muslims. Some of them, however, remained and they, along with the Gypsies, formed a large collection of outcasts. There are claims that the Gypsies brought the flamenco style from North India, although others argue that they simply nourished the synthesis of the traditions already present in the region with music of their own.9

The Gypsies were a persecuted subculture, at least until 1783 when Charles III granted them Spanish citizenship. During this time they developed the unique literature that was rooted in their poverty and expressed the plight of their difficult existence. Blas Infante suggested that the *cante jondo* evolved from the "smoldering amalgam of conquered races of

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B Ibid 37

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Israel J. Katz, "Flamenco," *The New Grove*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Satie (London: Macmillan Publishing, 2002) VIII, 921 & 923.

the barbarous European Castilian feudalism." 10 Whatever its source, by the mid-eighteenth century poetic and musical forms of the *cante jondo* had been established. Although the people and their music were rejected by the bourgeois, nevertheless, "deep song" became increasingly popular at public feasts and taverns across Andalusia. By the 1840s, café cantantes (tavern performances) were established in Seville, Cadiz, Jerez de la Frontera and Málaga. From these locations they spread throughout Andalusia by the 1860s. At this time the *cante flamenco* entered a new phase in which the number of non-gypsy performers increased and spread to other provinces. Although the jondo type songs still dominated, many other styles of songs were introduced and the flamenco took on local characteristics in each of the regions. In the early 1920s, Manuel de Falla, along with Lorca and several other artists living in Granada, were concerned about losing the authenticity of the cante jondo. In 1922, in an effort to revitalize the tradition, they held a festival, a singing competition, Concurso de Cante Jondo. The festival, although historically significant, was not completely successful in returning flamenco to its "deep song" roots. The flamenco continued to be subjected to flagrant commercialism and the aristocracy did not accept it as a legitimate art form. However, in 1956, the competition and festival of song was reinstated in Cordoba and a chair of flamencology was created in Jerez.<sup>11</sup>

Falla's research and Lorca's series of lectures brought about a generally accepted view on the *cante jondo* that persisted until the 1950s.<sup>12</sup> At that time, Anselmo G. Climent and Jose C. de Luna challenged Lorca's portrayal of the Gypsy as the dominant source of flamenco. The challenge led to a controversy as to whether flamenco was rooted in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> As cited in Mitchell, 11.

<sup>11</sup> Katz, "Flamenco," 921.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

Gitano ethnicity or was a poetic invention of the French romantic writers that grew into a Spanish tourist attraction.<sup>13</sup> However, most writers agree that the Andalusian identity was rooted in the synthesis of the groups of people who inhabited the South of Spain before 1492, the Christians, Muslims, Jews and Gitanos; and that in the fifteenth century the heavy hand of Madrid worked to homogenize the separate culture. Historians differ in their views regarding the dominant influences in establishing the *cante jondo*: Caballero Angel Alvarez believes the Gitanos to be dominant, Blas Infante the Muslims and Rafael Cansinos Assens the Jews.<sup>14</sup> There are also different opinions as to the etymology of the word flamenco. Felipe Pedrell, George Borrow, Fernandez de Castillejo and De Onis assign a completely different root to the word. There are many conflicting theories on the history of the *cante jondo* and flamenco, but as of the end of the twentieth century there is no detailed study that might reconcile these different opinions. The *cancioneros* (Spanish anthologies) still hold the key to many debated questions.<sup>15</sup>

### Formal Conventions

A number of conventions surround the performance of the *cante jondo* some of which are the *juerga*, the *cuadro flamenco*, and the *duende*. Knowledge of these will help in understanding the medium. Katz refers to the *juerga* as "high-spirited intimate settings of closed door flamenco sessions." They often stimulated commercial enterprises. Timothy Mitchell describes the flamenco origins in this way,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> This controversy is discussed in detail in William Washabaugh, *Flamenco: Passion, Politics and Popular Culture*(Washington D.C.: Berg, 1996) 73-75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Katz, 923.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

...wine and whisky, gambling, prostitution, gitanos, young toughs, free-spending señoritos [rich male sponsors] and ultimately decadent intellectuals were never far away. In flamenco *juergas* covert and sinful practices were the norm.

Mitchell also brings out the complimentarity of the situation,

It is therefore one of the fundamental ironies of the Spanish culture that the singing style nurtured in the lowlife milieu would evolve into what even some priests consider to be the most sublime expression of Andalusian spirituality.<sup>17</sup>

The *cante jondo*, obviously, had two diverse poles.

Another important term in the performance of "deep song" is the *cuadro flamenco* which refers to a semi-circle of costumed singers, dancers and instrumentalists who would present the flamenco. These performers would sit on a raised platform (*a tablao*), performing as a group with each member taking his or her turn as a soloist. The entertainment began with an extended guitar introduction with *jaleo* (shouts of encouragement, "Ay!") and *palmas* (clapping) arousing audience participation and setting the mood. Before singing the *cante*, the *cantaor* tuned his voice up with *salidas* (melismas on "ay"), which the guitarist follows intuitively. The vocalist usually has a hoarse, nasal timbre (*rajo*, *a voz afilla*), which is one of the distinctive qualities of the genre. The performance usually ended with a grand finale (*fin de fiesta*), the entire ensemble participating in an enthusiastic singing and dancing extravaganza.<sup>18</sup>

The *duende* is another term associated with Spanish artists and is central to the *cante jondo*. It literally means a hobgoblin or a poltergeist-like spirit or demon. However, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Mitchell, 128-129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Katz, 923.

Spanish connotation involves a special inspiration in performance.<sup>19</sup> This inspiration can take over any *cante jondo* singer, dancer or guitarist and is reportedly a very moving event. The performer goes into a trance-like state and the audience is moved to tears. This subject has been treated with some skepticism in the later twentieth century. Clause Schreiner relates an account, when flamenco artist, Juan F. Talegas was asked about *duende*, he retorted,

Nonsense! Where did you foreigners ever get this idea of *duende*? From Garcia Lorca maybe? *Duende*, it's like a fever, like malaria. I had the *duende* only twice in my life, but afterwards they had to carry me out.<sup>20</sup>

Mitchell suggests that the *duende* is part of the alcoholic stupor of the *juega*.<sup>21</sup> Bernard Friedrich Schulze's theory about the phenomenon is that it "...is the agreement between an inner hearing and external sound." William Washabaugh says the key to *duende* is "ferocious sincerity," establishing contact with the "transcendental core of the emotion." In all, it is an experience which the Andalusian performer and the audience shared when everything connected, the performer expressing his inner-most emotions and the audience participating in that.

In his well-known lecture on *duende*, Lorca provides elaborate detail as to its powers. He relates,

Every art and, in fact, every country is capable of *duende*, angel and muse. And just as Germany has, with a few exceptions, muse and Italy shall always have angel, so in all ages Spain is moved by the *duende*, for it is a country of ancient music and dance where the *duende* squeezes the lemon of dawn – a country of death. A country open to death. <sup>24</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Morris, "Glossary," Son of Andalusia, 447.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Clause Schreiner, ed., *Flamenco* (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1996), 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Mitchell, 175.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Schreiner, 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Washabaugh, 89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Federico Garcia Lorca, *Deep Song and Other Prose*, ed and trans. By Christoper Maurer (New York: New Directions Publishing, 1980), 47.

Lorca further discusses the different national forms of inspiration.

The muse and the angel come from without; the angel gives lights, and the muse gives forms... But one must awaken the *duende* in the remotest mansions of the blood."<sup>25</sup>

The poet also describes the nature of this Spanish spirit.

The *duende* does not come at all unless he sees that death is possible. The *duende* must know beforehand that he can serenade death's house and rock those branches we all wear, branches do not have, will never have, any consolation.<sup>26</sup>

In this lecture, Lorca makes a statement that became prophetic in his own life. "In poetry this struggle for expression and communication of expression is sometimes fatal."<sup>27</sup> Stanton suggests that Lorca's life and art were the embodiment of *duende* for Spain. His voice "spoke for a whole race and reverberated with the echoes of the centuries."<sup>28</sup>

#### Form and Characteristics

Of the numerous song and poetic forms under the classification of flamenco, those that are the most authentic to the early gypsy roots are *cante jondo*. Schreiner puts all flamenco songs into three categories, *cante jondo* or *grande*, *cante intermedio* and *cante chico*. *Cante jondo*, also *cante grande*, are the songs that are the most dramatically intense and tragic; the majority of these are also *cantes gitanos*.

Our discussion will be limited to the *cante jondo* as the *cante intermedio* is a hybrid with less seriousness and *cante chico* is lighter still.<sup>29</sup> The *cante jondo* includes the *debla*, the *toña*, the *martinete*, the *saeta*, the *caña*, the *polo*, the *soleare*, the *siguiriya*, and the

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Stanton, 12-13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Schreiner, 68.

petenera. Some of these are unaccompanied, some accompanied and some are danced and some not danced. Of the unaccompanied songs, two of the earliest forms are the *debla* and the *toña*. They have no fixed beat (*campos*) and demand a strong vocal technique. They are laments full of sadness and pathos, the *debla* being almost sacred. The *martinete* is closely related to these. It is a blacksmith song developed in the Triana (the bowery of Seville). It was originally unaccompanied but is now sung to a hammer striking an iron. The poems of all three of these *cante jondo* generally have two *coplas* (stanzas) of four octasyllabic lines. The *martinete* also has a longer form. The *saeta*, meaning "arrow" or spontaneous outburst, is also a dramatic, unaccompanied song. It is used in religious processionals, the text dealing with the Passion of the death of Christ and the sorrow of the Virgin Mary. The *coplas* are made up of from four to six octasyllablic lines.

Of the accompanied forms, the *caña*, the *polo*, and the *soleare* are closely related. The *caña* is the oldest form and is rarely heard today. It was rarely danced while the *polo* was sometimes danced. The *soleare* is a danced form and one of the most popular of the flamencos. It originated with the Gypsies and is about pain of all kinds from their daily lives. There are two forms *soleá grande* which conform to the earlier songs with four octasyllable lines for each *copla* and the *soleá corta* or *soleariya*, having three eight syllable lines per stanza. The *soleares* is highly poetic with a very impressive *compas* (beat).<sup>32</sup> The music for this form is grouped into segments of twelve beats, four measures of 3/4 or 3/8 meter. Within this unit there are accents on specific beats: 3, 6, 8, 10 and 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Ibid., 71-78.

<sup>31</sup> Israel J. Katz, "Saeta," The New Grove, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Satie (London: Macmillan Publishers, 2002) XXII 84

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Schreiner, 70-77.

The song can have as many 12 beat units as necessary to complete the piece, but the last unit cadences on beat 10 (the downbeat of the fourth measure). A *falsetas* (guitar interlude) can be inserted between any of the units.





Figure 1, Soleares<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Ibid., 139.

Of the accompanied songs, the *siguiriya gitana* is identified by Gilbert Chase as the most genuine representation of the *cante jondo.*<sup>34</sup> Although accompanied, it is rarely danced and shows a Byzantine or oriental influence. It is closely related to the *playera*, from *plañidera* (lamentation) that is sung, still today, by women mourners (*plañideras*) at official wakes. Some of the themes central to the lament are boundless pessimism, unappeasable sorrow, the cruelty of fate, death and mothers. The *coplas* are set in alternating 7+5+7+5 syllables, with the shorter lines usually rhymed. There is also a shorter form that is a tercet (5+7+5).<sup>35</sup> The rhythms of the *siguiriyas* are the most difficult of all the flamenco song forms. It is also in twelve beat phrases, but with alternating 3/4 and 6/8 meter. Accents are on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> beats (Figure 2). The phrase and its following variations begin on the second quarter note of the 3/4 time or the first note of the 6/8 measure which is beat 5

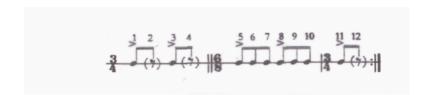


Figure 2, Siguiriyas beat unit

of the rhythmic unit. After however many variations are needed to complete the text, the last one ends on unit beat 10 or 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Gilbert Chase, *The Music of Spain*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Dover, 1959), 224.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Martin Cunningham, "Spain II, 2. Folk music," *The New Grove*, 20 vols., ed. Stanley Satie (London: Macmillan, 1980), XVII, 795-6.



Figure 3, Siguirigas<sup>36</sup>

The *petenera* is a form similar to the *soleares*, but little is known about its origins. It is possibly derived from Jewish synagogue songs. This form uses an octasyllable quatrain for its *copla*. Like the *siguiriya*, it is also based on a twelve beat unit with a 6/8 and 3/4 meter; however, the accents are on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> beats.



Figure 4, Peteneras 12 beat unit and the Peteneras.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Schreiner, 140-141.

All three of the rhythmic patterns shown above are variants of a single basic rhythm: two triples and three doubles, with the beginning of the unit shifted.

Extensive variation is possible if the musicians grasp the underlying rhythm. A *falsetas* (an improvised guitar interlude) may be inserted between any of the units.<sup>37</sup>

The poetic structure of the *cante jondo* can also be found with variations of the two basic types mentioned above, the octasyllable and the 7+5 quatrains. Any of the forms can be extended by an *estribillo* (refrain) which could be in a new meter and is often a hexasyllabic quatrain. The terms *copla* and the *estribillo* can refer to the music as well as to the poetry. The *estribillo* can also be a guitar interlude.<sup>38</sup> The stanza may consist of from three to five lines that may follow one of several rhyme schemes: AAAB ABCB, AAAAB, ABCD, for examples. These rhyme schemes often shift from one pattern to another within a single poem.

In addition to its distinctive poetic and musical forms, the *cante jondo* has many unique musical characteristics: unusual melodic contours and stylized ornamentation, strange modes and use of specific rhythmic patterns. The melodies usually have a narrow range, from a fourth to an octave and often feature a rising-falling pattern. They are commonly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Ibid., 73, 141-142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Cunningham, 795.

dominated by one short repeated figure or two short alternating motives.<sup>39</sup> One of the most frequent properties of "deep song" is the use of "enharmonic modulations" (melismas) involving a microtonal alteration resembling a slightly flattened "blue" note. The *cantaor* could also use these "enharmonics" as doubly-sharpened notes to give more color increasing emotional expressiveness.41

Written sources state that ornamentation can be light to profuse at times, intensifying special words. The spontaneity of the improvisation can greatly alter the form of the music and sometimes even the text, especially in unaccompanied songs. Appoggiaturas can be ascending and descending and are used to accent certain notes. They can also be microtonal coming from either North Indian or Arabic modal practices.<sup>42</sup>

Another very important defining feature of Andalusian music is the use of the Emode, classified by Donostia.<sup>43</sup> It has several different manifestations, the first a modified



Figure 5, The E-mode types<sup>44</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Ibid., 792.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> A different meaning than the usual theoretic connotation. "Enharmonic" meaning between the notes and "modulation" meaning melisma.

41 Chase, 1 & 224.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Katz, "Famenco," 923.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> He was a Basque composer and musicologist (1886-1956), an authority on Basque folk music. Itziar Larrinaga, "Donostia, José Antonio de," *The New Grove*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 29 vols., ed. By Stanley Satie (London: Macmillan Publishers, 2002), VII, 499.

scale resembling the Arabic maqám Hijāzā (augmented 2<sup>nd</sup>) (a), the second the medieval Phrygian or Greek or Roman Dorian (b) and the third a bimodal configuration alternating between major and minor 2nds and 3ds (c & d). The cadential pattern (e) is made up of descending parallel triads on A, G, F, E. The natural and sharpened thirds are used interchangeably throughout the rest of the melody. Manuel Garcia Matos<sup>45</sup> suggests that the use of the natural third degree was a Spanish practice resulting from the combination of the "Arabic" mode with the diatonic mode on E. Because of modern elements being introduced into the music the tonal character of Spanish melodies are often very ambiguous. In general, major scales predominate in Northern Spain and minor and E-mode in the South.

The exciting rhythm of the flamenco which is one of its most familiar elements, is also found in the *cante jondo*. In the accompanied forms, triple and duple meters frequently alternate. In addition, there are numerous polyrhythmic passages with the vocalist in one meter and the guitarist in another. Further cross rhythms occur with the *taconeo* (heelstamping), *palmas* sordas (hand-clapping) and *pitos* (finger-snapping). A rhythmic gesture, influenced by oriental practices, places "obsessively" repeated notes, usually preceded by an appoggiatura from above or below, suggesting a primitive effect. Unaccompanied *cante*, usually work or religious songs, are often unmeasured with asymmetric phrases and are profusely ornamented.

The everyday lives, work, religion, love and fiestas of the Andalusian people make up the original subject mater of the *cante jondo*. However, Chase describes the mood of these

<sup>44</sup> Silvia Martinez Garcia, "Spain, II, 2 (ii)(b): Traditional and popular music: Melodic features," *The New Grove*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Satie (London: Macmillan, 2002) XXIV, 139.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> He was a 20th century Spanish professor and musicologist specializing in Spanish folk music traditions. Jack Sage, "Garcia Matos, Manuel," *The New Grove*, 2nd ed., 29 vols., ed. by Stanley Satie (London: Macmillan Publishers, 2002). IX, 530.

<sup>46</sup> Katz, "Flamenco," 923.

songs as "ineradicable pessimism" and "profound fatalism." Mitchell, who attributes the origins of the song to "an ethnic drinking subculture," states that

The early flamenco song corpus dwells obsessively on poverty, hunger, prisons, jails, hospitals, prostitution, alcohol consumption, taverns, insanity, violent death, the caprices of cruel fate and the futility of effort.<sup>48</sup>

He feels that they are "a quest to recover from trauma," an effort to discharge and work through pain by dwelling on it and expressing it. The vocal interjections of both the performers and their audience are certainly a part of this cathartic release of pain, the *quejios* ("ay-ay-ay" vocalization) and the *jipio* (extended wailing). Clement maintains that "the aesthetically differentiated moan of *cante jondo* can give the truth of the song style independent of the song lyrics." Related to this is the vocal quality developed and used by the *cantaor*. Their raspy nasal sound was achieved through years of drinking and smoking and using a very abusively driven vocal technique. It could be compared with many popular singers today who are successful totally separate from the artistically trained voice. Mitchell observes that "*cante jondo* is by no means an obvious vehicle of refined aesthetic pleasure."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Chase, 224-225.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Mitchell, 84 & 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Ibid., 3, 127 & 227.

#### LORCA'S CANTE JONDO

## **Literary Output**

Federico Garcia Lorca (1898-1936) is one of the most renowned Spanish literary figures of the twentieth century. The traditional *cante jondo* was a basic influence in most, if not all, of his writings. It was his goal to lift this genre that was being sequestered to the taverns and brothels to an art form worthy of representing Spanish nationalism. Lorca wrote several collections of poems directly based on the "deep song:" *El Poem del Cante Jondo* (written 1921-22, published 1931), *Canciones* (written 1921-26, published 1927), *Romancero Gitano* (written 1921-27, published 1928) and *El Diwan del Tamarit* (1931-1935). His lectures on the *Cante Jondo* and the *Duende*, published and translated into several languages, are artistic works in themselves that give great insight into his poetry. In the last few years of his life, most of his creative energy was devoted to writing numerous plays that also reflected many of his ideas on the *cante jondo*.

#### Lorca's Lecture on Cante Jondo

During the *Concurso del Cante Jondo*, the festival in Granada, Lorca presented the first of his lectures on "deep song." As previously mentioned, it was based on the research of Falla, but it was very much in his own language and style, as he presented an impassioned plea to preserve the ancient song. He based his efforts to build a Spanish musical identity on the *cante* upon examples given of Schumann's, Debussy's and Glinka's use of their own folk

music. He also brought to light that these composers had been influenced by the *cante jondo*, composing works based on Spanish music<sup>50</sup>

Lorca proclaims that the Andalusian song was "deeper than all the wells and all the seas that surround the world, much deeper than the present heart that creates it and the voice that sings it, because it is almost infinite."<sup>51</sup> In his presentation, besides giving its history, he extends it as the life blood of Andalusia.

Cultivated since time immemorial, the deep song's profound psalmody has moved every illustrious traveler who ever ventured across our strange, varied landscapes. From the peaks of the Sierra Nevada to the thirsty olive groves of Cordoba, from the Sierra de Cozorla to the joyful mouth of the Guadalquivir, deep song has traversed and defined our unique, complicated land of Andalusia.<sup>52</sup>

The poet spoke in detail about the nature and the spirit of the *cante*.

In these poems Pain is made flesh, takes human form, and shows her profile; she is a dark woman wanting to catch birds in her net of wind.

All of the poems of deep song are magnificently pantheistic; they consult the wind, the earth, the sea, the moon, and things as simple as a violet, a rosemary, a bird. All exterior objects assume their personalities and even play active roles in the lyrical action.<sup>53</sup>

His contemporaries who wrote poetry based on the cante jondo were too educated to achieve the true "deep song," according Lorca. The early anonymous cante was drawn straight from the heart of the people.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 34.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Lorca . 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Federico Garcia Lorca, *Deep Song and Other Prose*, ed. and trans by Christopher Maurer (New York: New Directions Books, 1975), 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Ibid., 28.

The true poems of deep song belong to no one – they float in the wind like golden thistle-down and each generation dresses them in a different color and passes them on to the next.<sup>54</sup>

In conclusion, Lorca pleads with his audience.

I respectfully appeal to all of you not to allow the precious living jewels of the race – the immense, thousand-year-old treasure that covers the spiritual surface of Andalusia – not to let that die.<sup>55</sup>

Here and elsewhere, Lorca is as animated in oration as the traditional *cante jondo* he defends and as his own dramatic poetry.

#### Characteristics of Lorca's Cante Jondo

It may seem inconsistent that Lorca wrote poetry based on *cante jondo*, when he was critical of his contemporaries who did so, such as Melchor de Palau, Salvador Rueda, Ventura Ruiz Aguilera, and Manuel Machado. His objective was different from others in that he did not to imitate the song of the Gypsies as they did. He believed their poetry compared to the natural songs of the people like "a paper rose to a real one." It was his intent to capture the essence of the traditional song and lift it to an artistic level. Lorca used the original song as a point of departure for his own creations. He extracted material and molded it to his own purposes, taking topics and lines and assigning them a new function in a new context. Carlos Ramos-Gil refers to this as "echo chambers." Lorca does maintain the pantheism of the old song, inanimate objects manifest a definite personality and have the capacity to move and feel: the wind, the olive trees, cactus, and agaves. They can also

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Morris, 191-192. Ramos-Gil's "echo chambers" discussed further on page 199.

possess helpful or harmful powers. Humans sometimes play a lesser roll in his poems. Stanton feels that Lorca's poetry was not as much his own personal voice as an expression for a whole people, "the Gypsies, Andalusians, Spaniards and ultimately all men" as we all experience pain in some form or another.<sup>57</sup>

The basic elements of *cante jondo* can all be found in Lorca's verse: song, dance, guitar, *pena* (pain), Andalusia and Gypsies, although stylized and altered to the medium of poetry, they lead to a highly original creation.<sup>58</sup> Lorca's poetry is non-linear and often fragmented, ambiguous and open ended. Lorca once commented that his poems possess "a great sense of anecdote. Nobody knows what happens, not even me."<sup>59</sup> The second *copla* of "Un Punto Lejano" illustrates the disjunct quality of his poems.

Los candiles se apagan. Unas muchachas ciegas preguntan a la luna, y por el aire ascienden espirales de llanto. The oil lamps are put out. Blind girls Ask to the moon, And in the air climbs Spirals of weeping.

Each line presents a strong image, but they do not seem totally connected. Vivid imagery is also a vital part of Lorca's poems. In "Casida del Llanto" he writes, "a thousand violins fit into the palm of my hand" and in "Fuera" he describes, "Long blue breezes / skate on the river / and the landscape goes / through a huge bevel."

Lorca was closely connected to his native soil. He said, "I love the earth. I feel myself joined to it in all my emotions. My most distant memories of childhood have a taste

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Stanton, 27, 55, 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> D. Gareth Walters, Canciones and the Early Poetry of Lorca (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), 13.

of the earth." This reaches to the very core of his poetry. He always returned there for strength and inspiration, his *querencia* (a bull's natural comfort zone in the ring).<sup>60</sup>

Above all Lorca's poetry is symbolic and many of those symbols are linked to "the earth," his Andalusian heritage. It vacillates between two extreme poles of "love and death, plentitude and tragedy." Often the "plentitude" is associated with the coast, the sea and Seville and the "tragedy" with the interior lands, the olive tree, the parched river bed, Granada and Cordova. Lorca writes of the land sighing for the sea. So many things are linked with death: the color black, the wind, candles, a closed eye, the cypress. Flowers may be emblems of sensual beauty or passion in a barren landscape. However, their negative aspects are often projected: "the deathly odor of spikenards, the white sterility of camellias, the bloody color of carnations, the acidity of lemons, the bitterness of olives and oleander." The Naranja (orange) is an often used symbol which can represent the sun and warmth, love and life, passion and Seville. The list of associations is as varied as the landscapes of Andalusia and meanings of the symbols sometimes change from one poem to the next or at least from one author's assessment to the next. However, Lorca's poetry remains extremely picturesque and dramatic and like the traditional cante jondo able to evoke an emotional response.

In writing the poems for *El Poema del Cante Jondo* as preparation for the *Concurso*, Lorca was very proud and excited about his work. He wrote to his friend Adolph Salazar.

If you could only see how much I have worked....I am putting the final flourishes to the *Poema del Cante Jondo*, which I shall publish to coincide with the Concurso. It is something different from the *suites* and full of Andalusian echoes. Its rhythm

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Stanton, 55. In a bullfight, there is an area of the ring where the bull instinctively gravitates. This place of "comfort," where he continually returns, is his *querencia*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Ibid., 30, 118.

is sophisticatedly popular and in it I present in all their glory the old *cantaores* all the fantastic fauna and flora which fill these sublime songs...The book begins with a motionless twilight and through it file past the *siguiriya*, the *soleá*, the *saeta* and the *petenera*. The book is full of gypsies, of lamps, of forges...it certainly has novelty!<sup>62</sup>

Lorca wrote *Poema del Cante Jondo* as more than a collection of independent poems. It has an overall structure with fifty-one poems divided into two sections. The first section has one long introductory poem, and then there are four shorter sections each based on *cante jondo* song forms: the *siguiriya*, *soleá*, *saeta* and *petenera*. The poems within each unit are not written in the poetic forms specified but are based on Lorca's reactions to the spirit and music of the particular *cante*. The second division is based on elements of Andalusian life: people, landscapes, cities, and the *cante jondo* singers, dancers and cafes. Each of the topics includes several poems.<sup>63</sup>

The group of poems on the *siguiriya*, "Poema de la *siguiriya* gitana," consists of seven poems that are structured so that "its various movements follow the same sequence as the musical *siguiriya*." In a *siguiriya gitana*, as a part of the *café cantantes* discussed above, the guitar begins strumming to set the rhythm pattern for the song. The cantaor lets out a strident cry, his *grito*, interrupting the guitar. After the dramatic tension of the cry, there is an "audible silence that absorbs the lingering reverberations of sound." This is followed by the lyrics of the song which mount in agitation as the *cantor* reaches the climax of his *cante*. Then the singer winds down as the musical tension diminishes and the song ends. The seven poems in the group represent this musical sequence in verse with the text illustrating the music. They can be diagramed as in Figure 6.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Morris, 183-184.

<sup>63</sup> Norman C. Miller, Garcia Lorca's Poema del Canta Jondo (London: Tamesis, 1978), 68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Ibid., 69.

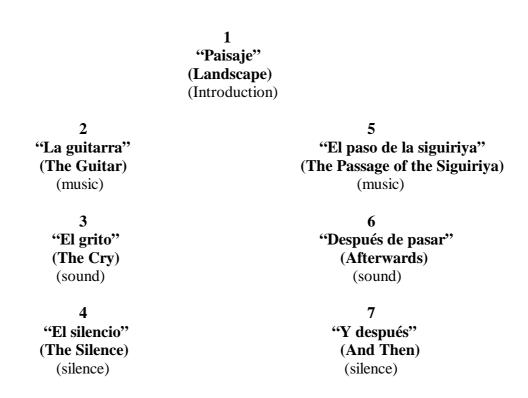


Figure 6, "Poema de la siguiriya" 65

The first poem describes the setting and creates the atmosphere, the second, about a guitar, illustrates the instrumental introduction and the third poem, about a cry, sets forth the *cantaor*'s vocal entrance. The fifth poem is the body of the musical cycle and it closes with silence. The other song representations in the first half of the work are written with the same ideas, but they are not as clearly laid out as the *siguiriya*. By these means, Lorca, was literally trying to put music into words. Stanton describes it like this,

Through the magic of word and rhythm, through an intuition of the hidden roots of suffering in his people, Lorca transposed to the medium of poetry what had only been expressed before in music.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Stanton, 76.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Ibid., 36.

The *Canciones* written about the same time as the *Poema del Cante Jondo* also has numerous topical categories of poems. There are seventy poems in eleven categories like: "Nocturnos de la ventana" (Nocturnes from the Window), "Canciones para niños" (Songs for Children), "Andaluzas" (Andalusian Songs), "Juergos" (Games) and "Canciones de luna" (Songs of the Moon). In describing this collection, Lorca said, "I have suppressed the rhythmic songs in spite of their success, because I want everything to have a lofty mountain air." The poems are rhythmically freer, giving more reigns to the verbal quality. In a letter to Fernández Almagro, Lorca explained that the *Canciones* were not as "gypsified" and were more lyrical than *Poema de Cante Jondo*. They were not based on the *cante jondo* songs, but they are still very Andalusian and remain in the spirit of the "deep song."

The *Diwán del Tamarit* was a return to Andalusian roots for Lorca who had been to New York and had been focusing more on his dramas. It is divided into two parts: "Gacelas" (Ghazels) with eleven poems and "Casida" (Qasidas) with nine. Stanton describes the collection as being in the same world as *Poema del Cante Jondo* and *Romancero gitano*, but "the accessory and the picturesque are suppressed - only essences count." It is much more influenced by Arabian poetry than the earlier works. It is a well know fact that Lorca was a homosexual and Morris points out that critics detect "a preoccupation with homosexuality in the *Diwán*. In the early twentieth century, Granada evidently had one of the largest homosexual subcultures in Spain which had roots going back to the Arabic occupation. Therefore many of the symbols have a secondary connotation associated with that life style. 69

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Morris, 266.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Stanton, 62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Morris, 405-406.

## The Five Poems in Fábregas' Song Cycle

The poems in the 1992 song cycle by Fábregas were selected from various Lorca collections. The first, "Casida del Llanto," is from El Diwán del Tamarit. "Un Punto Lejano," "Ay!" and "Fuera," the second, third and fifth songs, are from El Poema del Cante Jondo. The fourth song, "La Luna Asoma" is from Canciones. 70 The main connecting thread running through all of the songs is the *cante jondo* cathartic verbal expression of pain.

# "Casida del Llanto" (Casida of the Lament)

He cerrado me balcón porque no quiero oir el llanto,	(7) (9)	I have shut my balcony Because I do not want to hear the weeping,
pero por detrás de los grises muros	(11)	But from behind the grey walls
no se oye otra cosa que el llanto.	(11)	Nothing else is heard but the weeping.
Hay muy pocos ángeles que canten,	(10)	There are very few angels that sing,
hay muy pocos perros que ladren,	(9)	There are very few dogs that bark.
mil violins caben en la palma de me		A thousand violins fit into the palm of my
mano.	(15)	hand.
Pero el llanto es un perro inmenso,	(12)	But the weeping is an immense dog,
el llanto es un ángel inmenso,	(10)	The weeping is an immense angel,
el llanto es un violín inmenso,	(11)	The weeping is an immense violin,
las lágrimas amordazan al viento,.	(11)	The tears muzzle the wind,
y no se oye otra cosa que el llanto.	(13)	Nothing else is heard but the weeping. <sup>71</sup>

Morris suggests that this poem was based on "Qasida en Nun" by an eleventh century poet, Ben Zaydún of Córdoba. The poem is about tears that would not stop flowing for a lost lover and their "white nights of love." 72

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Elisenda Fábregas, "Notes from the Composer," Five Poems of Garcia Lorca (San Antonio: Hidden Oaks Music, 1992). <sup>71</sup> All the poems in the song cycle were translated by Fábregas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Morris, 404

# "Un Punto Lejano" (A Distant Point)

Los niños miran	(5)	The children look
un punto lejano.	(6)	At a distant point.
Los candiles se apagan.	(8)	The oil lamps are put out (extinguished).
Unas muchachas ciegas	(7)	Blind girls
preguntan a la luna,	(7)	Ask to the moon,
y por el aire ascienden	(8)	And in the air clime
espirales de llanto.	(7)	Spirals of weeping.
Las montañas miran	(6)	The mountains look
Un punto lejano.	(6)	At a distant point.

The name of this poem is actually "Después de pasar." It is the sixth verse in the "Poema de la *siguiriya*," outlined above. This piece is very mysterious and foreboding. The circular nature of the "spirals of weeping." is illustrated by the similarity of the beginning and ending couplets. The poem is also full of unanswered questions, a quality Lorca listed as characteristic of *cante jondo* in his lecture.<sup>73</sup>

# "Ay!"

El grito deja en el viento	(8)	The scream leaves in the wind
Una sombra de ciprés.	(7)	A shadow of cypress.
(Dejadme en este campo llorando.)	(7)	(Leave me in this field
norando.)	(3)	crying.)
Todo se ha roto en el mundo. (10)		All is broken in the world.
No queda más que el siler	ncio. (9)	Only silence remains.
(Dejadme en este campo	(7)	(Leave me in this field
llorando.)	(3)	crying.)
El horizonte sin luz	(7)	The horizon without light
Está mordido de hogueras	s. (9)	Is bitten with bonfires.
(Ya os he dicho que me d	ejéis (10)	(I have already told you to leave me
en este campo	(5)	in this field
llorando.)	(3)	crying.)

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Miller, 74.

This song is from the "Poema del la *soléa*" in Lorca's *Poema del Cante Jondo*. It occupies the same position in that set as the third song in the *siguiriya* section demonstrated above. The cry or scream that this song embodies was the *cantaores*' emotional preparation for the body of the song that would follow. The refrain of the poem creates a second level of dialogue as Lorca addresses the audience directly "rejecting all hope of consolation." The last time it is sung it is expanded like an improvisational extension of the statement, "I have already told you to leave me in this field crying."

# "La Luna Asoma" (The Moon Rising)

Cuando sale la luna	(7)	When the moon rises,
Se pierden las campanad	las(8)	The bells hang silent,
y aparecen las sendas	(7)	And footpaths appear
impenetrables.	(5)	impenetrable.
Cuando sale la luna	(7)	When the moon rises,
el mar cubre la tierra	(7)	The sea covers the land,
y el corazón se siente	(8)	And the heart feels
isla en el infinito.	(8)	Like an island in infinity.
N. 1.	(7)	NI L
Nadie come naranjas	(7)	Nobody eats oranges
bajo la luna llena.	(7)	Under the full moon.
es preciso comer	(6)	One must eat fruit
Fruta verde y helada.	(8)	That is green and cold.
Cuando sale la luna	(7)	When the moon rises,
de cien rostros iguales,	(7)	Moon of a hundred equal faces,
la moneda de plata	(7)	The silver coinage
solloza en el bolsillo.	(8)	Sobs in the pocket.
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This poem is from the "Canciones de luna" which is the seventh topical category of the Canciones. The moon is associated with death and darkness, a central theme of the cante jondo, the music of the dark. The poem outlines a lonely state under the moon, "like

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Ibid., 79.

an island in infinity" and oranges, symbols of warmth and passion, cannot be eaten there. In the last verse the loneliness remains even in a crowd and even money cannot erase it.

# "Fuera" (Out)

Gritos abandonados	(7)	Abandoned screams
tiemblan en el viento.	(6)	Tremble in the wind.
(I Andalucía punzante!)	(7)	(Andalusia stabber!)
Largas brisas azules	(7)	Long blue breezes
patinan por el río	(7)	Skate on the river
y el paisaje se va	(7)	And the landscape goes
por un bisel inmenso.	(7)	Through a huge bevel

This poem was not in the 1931 published version of *Poema del Cante Jondo*, but it was in the unpublished 1922 version. In the context of the *cante jondo*, it is another cry of pain that echoes through the country side, like so many others. However, he does identify Andalusia as the "stabber," the murderer. Ultimately he was murdered by his country; he was more likely shot, but his loss has echoed through the rivers and bevels of its landscape.

### ELISENDA FÁBREGAS' CANTE JONDO

# Song Cycles to Texts by Lorca

Elisenda Fábregas (b. 1955) has written two song cycles based on Lorca's *cante jondo*. The first written is *Five Songs for Soprano and Piano* (1987) and the second, the subject of this essay, is *Five Poems of Garcia Lorca* (1992). She has also composed an opera on Lorca's drama, *Yerma*, but it has not been published. As the title suggests, the first cycle is for solo soprano with piano accompaniment. The second cycle was commissioned by the Gotham Ensemble in New York to commemorate a celebration for the Discovery of America by the Spanish. The 1992 song cycle was composed for soprano, clarinet, cello and piano to meet the ensemble's need. The composer has also orchestrated the cycle, but it is not published and has yet to be performed. The cycles are two of Fábregas' earliest compositions and combine Spanish elements with Impressionism and Western techniques.

Ms. Fábregas maintains that you must always be able to dance to her music. The compositions are the composition of the cycles are two of the cycles are the cycles.

### Musical Training and Back Ground

The Spanish born composer was raised in Terrassa, a town outside of Barcelona in Catalonia. She was trained as a concert pianist and received her first doctorate from the Barcelona Conservatory in 1978. She then traveled to the United States on a Fullbright Scholarship and completed a master at the Juilliard School (1983) and another doctorate from Columbia University Teachers College (1992). She began accompanying for the Spanish

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Elisenda Fábregas, Interview by Mary Etta Hobbs, transcript Appendix B, Lobby of St. Anthony's Hotel, San Antonio, Texas, 21 July 2003, 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Ibid., 56.

dance studio while at Juilliard and was asked to improvise Spanish dance music. She even toured with the Maria Benitez Dance Company in 1986.<sup>78</sup> She became so proficient that she was encouraged to write her pieces down. Fábregas found writing music to be her true passion and is now working full time as a composer in San Antonio, Texas. She describes herself as a self taught composer, because her training was not in composition.<sup>79</sup>

### Other Twentieth Century Settings of Lorca's Poems

George Crumb has the greatest number and the most widely known settings of Lorca's work in America. His song collections to Lorca's texts include *Madrigals* (1964-1969) and *Ancient Voices of Children* (1970). The American composer was also commissioned to compose *Night of the Four Moons* to commemorate the American Space Mission. It is also based on Lorca's texts. His settings of Lorca's works are very different than those by Fábregas. She sets the poems in their entirety, while Crumb extracts fragments of the poems, using the poet's imagery to create his own message. He extracted phrases about the moon from Lorca's poems for *Night of the Four Moons* and manipulated them for his own purposes. Crumb does incorporate some Spanish influences in his music and carries over some of Lorca's symbolism, the child representing rebirth and the moon death. He also addresses one of Lorca's central themes in this work, that of the conflict between primitivism and civilization. Crumb uses a composing technique which he calls "mosaic." He uses

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Diane Windeler, "Special to the Express-News," San Antonio Express-News (January 16, 2000).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Fábregas, Interview, 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Christy Lee Walters, Text Settings of Federico Garcia Lorca's Poema del Cante Jondo: A Comparative Analysis of Selected Works forVoice and Piano by Twentieth-Century Spanish composers (DMA diss., Florida State University, 1999). 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Julia Harder Graddy, "Celebrating Space Missions: A Comparative Analysis of *Apollo Circling* by Ronald Perera and *Night of the Four Moons* by George Crumb," *Journal of Slinging*, vol. 55 (March-April, 1990), 21.

minute building blocks of pitch and rhythmic elements and his harmonies are built on small trichordal cells.<sup>82</sup>

As close as Falla and Lorca worked together on the *cante jondo*, it is surprising that they have no published songs together. Falla composed his *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas* (Seven Spanish Folksongs) in 1922, the same year as the *Concurso*. However, all of these piano (not guitar) accompanied songs, except the last, are representative of regions of Spain other than Andalusia. The seventh song is entitled "*Polo*," one of the early forms of the *cante jondo*. The accompaniment is guitar-like and has alternating triple and duple beats. The layout of the song is similar to *café cantantes* practices described earlier. There is a short introduction and the *cantaor*'s cry, "Ay!," is followed by a *falsettas*-like piano interlude. In measure thirty-one, the vocalist begins the body of the song. The written ornamentation gives an idea of a *cantaor*'s improvisational style, but without the "harmonic melismas" which are not possible with Western notation and a tempered instrument like the piano. It is in the Phrygian mode, with the exception of the raised third at the end and the range is moderate. As Falla was completely comfortable with the medium, this piece is about as close an example we can experience to the early *cante jondo* with the limitations of Western musical notation.<sup>83</sup>

Some of the Spanish composers that did set Lorca's poetry to music are Julián Bautista (1901-1961), Jesus Garcia Leoz (1904-1953), Xavier Montsalvatge (b. 1912), Manuel Oltra (b. 1922), and Antón Garcia Abril (b. 1949).<sup>84</sup> Christie Walters, in her dissertation on Lorca song cycle settings of Bautist, Abril and Oltra assesses their

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Thomas R. de Dobay, "The Evolution of Harmonic Style in the Lorca Works of Crumb," *Journal of Music Theory*, 28/1(1984), 90.

<sup>83</sup> Manuel de Falla, Siete Canciones Populares Españolas (Boca Raton, Florida: Masters Music Publication), 28-32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>84</sup> Walters, 4.

compositional style as generally conservative. Their style is mixed with Spanish elements expressed through the use of rhythm, harmony and the vocal line. Walters explains that,

Instances of cross-rhythms odd meters, and frequent changes are present in all three cycles. Formal structures are standard, with the ternary form being the most frequent. All three composers make use of a harmonic progression based on the Andalusian mode, a stepwise parallel shifting of harmony from a tonic chord to the dominant...The songs share approximately the same range in the vocal line and have a medium tessitura.<sup>85</sup>

These works are all written for piano accompaniment with the voice, a departure from the customary use of the guitar in the *cante jondo*.

French, British, German and Russian composers have also set texts by Lorca, however, generally the Spanish composers understand the musical language and have a better feel for the history of the *cante jondo* roots.

Cante Jondo Elements in Fábregas' Five Poems by Garcia Lorca

Although Elisenda Fábregas is from Catalonia in Northern Spain, she, like many non-Andalusian Spanish people, grew up with the literary presence of the Lorca. However, it was not until the 1980s, when she was looking for sources for composition, that she truly became focused on his work.

I remember going through his poetry, especially *Poem del Cante Jondo* and I was fascinated, because I, like him, had that sense of pain... a sense of longing and darkness...and so I was very close to that and I love his symbolism...but most of the time it [his poetry] is internal. I like poetry that is internal...it makes my imagination work... and I see images.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Ibid., 78-79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Fábregas, Interview, 50.

In selecting the songs for her cycles, Fábregas did not have a specific theme in mind for the poems being used. She states that she read through many of Lorca's poems and picked the ones she responded to emotionally and that dramatically inspired her.<sup>87</sup>

The instrumentation and vocal style required for *Five Poems* are probably elements that are least consistent with the *cante jondo* style. The clarinet, cello and piano are very different from the guitar in timbre, size of sound and technical production. The piano has been used in much of the twentieth century literature to represent the guitar, as seen in the above repertoire and much of the piano writing is in imitation of the guitar. The introduction of "La Luna Asoma" (ms. 1ff) is representative of a guitar strum.



Figure 7, "La Luna Asoma" (P. 25, ms. 1-7) (Used by Permission)

Also, in "Fuera" (m. 18) there is a downward, three octave arpeggiated flurry that has a guitar character (Fig. 8). The timbre of the clarinet could be compared to the *cantaor*'s pressed tone.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>87</sup> Ibid., 53.



Figure 8, "Fuera" (P. 35, m. 17-18) (Used by Permission)

The vocal requirement differs considerably from the traditional song. Fábregas qualifies her pieces as "operatic." The cycle was written for Rachel Rosales, a dramatic soprano with an extensive range, who sings with the warmth and richness of a mezzo. Fábregas says that smaller voices lack "the depth and the power and the drama. So that was what attracted me to her..." The spirit of "deep song" is sought through a dramatic, rich tone rather than a strident one. In the *cante jondo* the voice is the dominate part, but in Fábregas' cycle, although the piano and voice are the most prominent, all four parts are given great melodic and rhythmic interest.

Fábregas' rhythmic treatment is characteristic of the Spanish music in general, with its triplets and syncopation. She does not use the twelve note units of the *cante jondo* accompanied forms but takes their essence, the triple/duple contrast. "Ay!" is in triple meter

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> Ibid., 56.

(6/8, 9/8 and 12/8), but there are a few measures that shift to duple; measures 5 and 6 move from 12/8 into 6/4 (not notated) at the end of the introduction (Fig. 9). Then in measures 33 and 49 the duple and triple meters are played and sung simultaneously (Fig. 10 & 11).



Figure 9, "Ay!" (P. 11, ms. 4, 5 & 6) (Used by Permission)



Figure 10, "Ay!" (P. 17, ms. 32 & 33) (Used by Permission)



Figure 11, "Ay!" (P. 21, ms. 49 & 50) (Used by Permission)

Several instances of the obsessively repeated notes of the *cante jondo* can be found in the song cycle. In "Fuera" (ms. 7) the piano builds intensity with this technique, leading to the vocal entrance (m. 9).

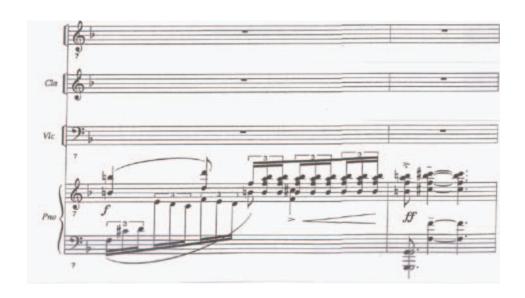


Figure 12, "Fuera" (P. 32, ms. 7-8) (Used by Permission)

It occurs again later, before the vocalist cries "Andalusia stabber!" (Fig. 13).

Fábregas' melodic treatment, again, shows both similarities and differences from its source of inspiration. The rising and falling diatonic patterns of the *cante jondo* can be seen in the cycle, not only in the vocal line, but in all the instrumental parts as in measures 36-37 of "La Luna Asoma" (Fig. 14).



Figure 13, "Fuera" (P. 34, ms. 13-14) (Used by Permission)



Figure 14, "La Luna Asoma" (P. 29, ms. 36-37) (Used by Permission)

The dissimilarity from the traditional song is found in range as mentioned earlier.

The vocalist is required to sing from a low A (below staff) to a high D (above staff).

Fábregas also gives the pianist a huge range, having runs that span several octaves, arpeggios as seen in Figure 9 and runs incorporating both extremes of the instrument at once as in "Fuera" measure 28 (Fig. 15).



Figure 15, "Fuera" (P. 37, ms. 28) (Used by Permission)

Fábregas, who grew up with modal use, has a variety of modes and octatonic scales in *Five Poems* that are enlisted to convey a dark mysterious quality. Both "Casida del Llante" and "Un Punto Lejano" are built on octatonic scales alternated with the Lydian mode. The third song, "Ay!," uses the Andalusian E-mode along with another octatonic scale. It also uses the descending tetrachord chord of the E-mode as the final cadence of the piece.

Measure 59 is a C# chord, 60 a B (the vocal note is an upper neighbor), 61 and 62 are on A with a C natural and it ends on a G# 9<sup>th</sup> chord (See Figure 15).



Figure 16, Final cadence of "Ay!" (P. 23-24, ms. 59-64) (Used by Permission)

"La Luna Asoma" is the most tonal of the songs, modulating through a series of minor keys, including c# to g (down an augmented 4th), g to d (down a 4<sup>th</sup>), d to a (down a 4<sup>th</sup>), and a to e flat (down an augmented 4<sup>th</sup>) where it concludes. In "Fuera," Fábregas again uses an octatonic scale, but this time contrasts it with the Dorian. The Andalusian mode is used in only one of the songs of the cycle as Fábregas conveys darkness and mystery of the *cante jondo*. Over all, she expands the palette of the traditional song in several ways including adding numerous modes and scales that are not used in the old song.<sup>89</sup>

All of the songs except the last are in three part form. The first two are ternary (ABA') and the second two are modified strophic (A A'A''). The last song is binary with an introduction, an instrumental development between the A and B sections and a transition and coda at the end. <sup>90</sup>

Fábregas' setting of the text is basically syllabic with only an occasional melisma. She states that she wants it to sound free and spontaneous, but there are no extended "Ays" as seen in the Falla "*Polo*," the Batista, Oltra and Abril settings of Lorca and the traditional cante jondo. Although Fábregas states that she would never change Lorca's poetry, she does manipulate the structure by repeating words, phrases and parts of phrases, to make it fit her musical line. Her prosody is effective and has become more so from an unpublished version to her published version of the work. She improved the word setting to make better use of rhythms to emphasize accented syllables. There are places where the tessitura is so high the words will never be understood, but they are always repetitions of words that have

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Fábregas, Interview, 68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> For a more extensive examination of the analysis see Appendix C.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Fábregas, Interview,63.

already been stated and the extreme range expresses great intensity. Lorca's words are set with drama and motion from the wide tessitura and the energy of the rhythm and the dissonance in the harmony. Fábregas expresses the text very effectively.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The traditional *cante jondo* is a song unique to Andalusia as it developed from the "mosaic" of cultures that have inhabited its borders, including Arabs, Jews and Gypsies. The genre expresses the history of the region, reveals the typography of the landscape and cries the tears of its people. "Deep song" is the forerunner of the flamenco, but it is a communication of a dark soul rather than an exuberant entertainment. The original folk idiom is a medium totally apart from the artistic community that is less concerned with beauty than the cathartic release of pain of every day life. It is truth in all its severity and ugliness and honesty. It expresses the soul of Andalusia.

Lorca felt the validity of "deep song" and he was disturbed that it was being corrupted by commercialism and was afraid it would be lost to posterity. His goal was to preserve the essence of the song and lift it to an artistic plain. He saw folk music as the core of the national musical and literary identity in Germany, France and Russia and worked to establish Spain as an artistic equal.

Lorca's writings were not imitations of the traditional *cante jondo*. They echoed the history, the landscape and the tears, but they did so through symbolism and vivid imagery. The poet communicated on several levels, one as a voice of the Andalusia, Spain and ultimately mankind and another with his own private message. His life was short, but his legacy is long.

Fábregas, like Lorca, has taken a folk medium and expanded it beyond its limited folk medium. Being of Spanish heritage, but not Andalusian, she is less committed to the local musical constraints. She felt the humanity in Lorca's poetic cries and expressed them

through her own language. As a result her songs are intensely dramatic and are exciting pieces to perform.

Fábregas' *Five Poems by Garcia Lorca* is not a work to be approached lightly. It requires maturity, emotional commitment and a secure performance technique from all the performers. The composition began as a cry of a people; it was refined by the art of a poet, expanded by music of a composer and searches for performers to release it and an audience to receive it. It is an expression of Spanish culture that speaks to mankind.

### APPENDIX A

### **CANTE JONDO POEMS**

### Caña

A mi me pueden mandar a servir a Dios y al rey, pero dejar tu persona, no me lo manda la ley.

I can be ordered to serve God and my king, But no law can order me To leave you. Curro Dulce<sup>92</sup>

### Debla

Yo ya no era quien era, ni quien yo fui ya sere; soy un árbol de tristeza pegaito a la pare.

En el barrio de Triana se escuchaba en alta voz pena de la via tiene aquel que sea caló.

I am no longer who I was Nor will I be again, I am a tree of sadness In the shadow of a wall.

In the barrio of Triana One hears it loud and clear: If you are a gypsy You must fear life's sorrows.93

### Martinete

Lo mismo que aplasto el jierro pa jacerlo filigrana, quiero aplastá to queré de la noche a la mañana.

Mara mia de mi alma! Pare mio, qué verguenza! Que los gitanos se enteren Que tengo la fragua en venta. Just as I work the iron Into a filigree, I want to forge your love From morning to night.

Oh! My dearest mother! Dear father, what a disgrace! When the gypsies find out Our blacksmith shop is for sale.94

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Schreiner, 80. <sup>93</sup> Ibid., 71.

#### Polo

Toitos le piden a Dios la salud y la libertad; y yo le pido la muerte y no me la quiere dar. Every one asks God For freedom and good health, I, however, ask for death But this He will not grant me.<sup>95</sup>

#### Saeta

Ya viene el Cristo Moreno El Señor de los gitanos El mas grande y el mas gueno. Apretaitas las manos Pobre Jesús Nazareno.

Miralo por dónde viene Er Jesú de gran podé! A cada paso que da Nace un lirio y un clavé.

Virgen de la Macarena Reflejo de luna clara Da en tu carita morena. No hay cara como tu cara Ni pena como tu pena. Here comes the dark-skinned Christ, Lord of the gypsies, The highest and holiest, With hands bound, Poor Jesus of Nazareth.

Look at the way He comes, Jesus the all-powerful! Lilies and carnations bloom Wherever he sets his foot.

Virgin of Macarena, The bright moon's reflection Shines in your dark little face, there is no face like yours And no pain like your pain. <sup>96</sup>

#### Soleares

Si yo pudiera tirando mis penas a los arroyuelos el aguita de los mares, iba a llegar hasta er cielo.

Los ojos de mi morena se parecen a mis males; negros como mis fatigas, grandes como mis pesares. If I poured all my anguish Into the streams, The waters in the sea would Rise to the heavens.

The eyes of my beloved Are like my troubles, Dark as my pain And big as my sorrows.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Ibid., 74.

Hasta los árboles sienten que se caigan las jojas y esta gitana no siente la perdición de su honra.

A mi mare de mi alma lo que la camelo yo porque la tengo tan presente ay metia en el corazón.

Yo creia que el quere era cosa de juguete y ahora veo que se pasan las fatigas de la muerte.

Unos ojos negros vi. Desde entonces en el mundo Todo es negro para mi. Even the trees feel something When they shed their leaves, But this gypsy doesn't realize Her honor has been lost.

Mother, dear to my soul, How I love her, I will always carry her Deep in my heart.

I used to think Love was just a plaything, Now I see one goes through The agonies of death.

I beheld black eyes. Since then everything in the world Is black for me. <sup>97</sup>

# Siguiriya

Son tan grandes mis penas Que no caben más, Yo muero loco, sin caló de nadie En el hospital. So great are my torments I can no longer bear them. Mad and with no one's warmth I lie dying in the asylum. 98

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Ibid., 80.

### APPENDIX B

# INTERVIEW OF ELISENDA FÁBREGAS BY MARY ETTA HOBBS

Mary Etta Hobbs: Hello. I am Mary Etta Hobbs and I am working on my doctorate at the University of North Texas. I am here today interviewing Elisenda Fábregas and we are talking about her compositions. I have a number of questions I would like to ask about her *Five Poems of Garcia Lorca* from 1992 and then find out more about her personally and her compositional process.

The first question I'd like to ask Elisenda... Am I pronouncing that right, Elisenda? **Elisenda Fábregas**: Yes. Perfectly.

**Hobbs**: ... is, why did you settled in San Antonio? What brought you here?

**Fábregas**: I was, since '78, I was living in New York City, where I was studying at the Julliard School as a pianist and, in '93, I was offered a position at the University of Texas at San Antonio as an Assistant Professor of Piano. That's how I got here. I was very happy to come here, because it has so much Spanish history.

**Hobbs**: It is a beautiful, historic city.

**Fábregas**: Yes. Especially in the down town area.

**Hobbs**: You were raised in Barcelona?

**Fábregas**: I was raised in Terrassa which is a town that is about 45 minutes away from Barcelona. Right now Barcelona almost incorporates all the surrounding little cities. It [Terrassa] had a hundred-thousand in population. It was a small town and I was raised with a

middle class family and right from the start it was difficult to get the education I wanted in music, so twice a week we were taking the train to Barcelona with my Grandfather to the conservatory.

Hobbs: So, were your parents musical also? Were they musicians?

**Fábregas**: They were musical, but they were not musicians. My mother was a dilettante pianist. I remember her playing Chopin waltzes. I remember I was four... four and a half and I was very musical and I remember I started to play the piano with her. My grandfather who lived until '92, was always singing Catalonian folk songs, so he obviously had a good ear.

**Hobbs**: ..and who were your teachers as you were growing up that shaped your carrier in your early life?

Fábregas: I would say in Spain ... my piano teacher was Miguel Farre, actually was quite an excellent concert pianist in Barcelona. I studied with him for nine years. Obviously before that there were other people. I mean, even in my Catholic school there were some Nuns who were teaching me. Then I also studied harmony with some people and solfege. I had a very intense education, because in Spain it is not like in the States, we have parallel carriers. Basically, I was in a normal school through high school and at the same time I was going through the conservatory and doing parallel studies. So I studied ten years in music before I got my doctorate in Spain, in music and at the same time I was going through the University in chemistry and for three years... so I did three years of Biochemistry and then I stopped and then I continued in music. It is a lot more work... so I had ten years of solfege. I had three years of harmony. You know it is very academic... a lot more academic than it is here. We had a lot more theoretical things.

**Hobbs**: Than students do at a young age here?

Fábregas: In '78 I came to the States and I went to Julliard and I studied there with Joseph Raieff and Beverly Webster and I was there for seven years. Beverly was extremely helpful to me. He sort of freed me from the constraints that you find at Julliard and was I able to be more my own. Going to Julliard is a very intimidating thing to do and when I came to New York City I didn't speak any English. So I came in 1978 with four hundred dollars in my pocket and went to Julliard and I ask for a place to sleep and I couldn't speak so I just went like this....and the people there sent me to the YMCA for one night and I came back and spoke French.... at Julliard at the admissions office and they sent me to the Barbizon Hotel for a week ... and then after a month... I was supposed to get a Fulbright Scholarship, but there was some problems with the money getting there and I ran out of money. I could write a book on just those times and all the different times. I ended up with some Nuns that took care of me for about five or six month until the money arrived. Then everything cleared and, of course, we were speaking English, so it took me about two years, I think, before I was able to speak English really well and that's basically, musically speaking, my education.

Most of the education I received was in Spain. I think, at Julliard I was allowed to explore other sides, because my professors wanted me to play just five pieces a year to prepare for the jury and that was kind of boring for me, so I went to the library and was reading and reading music. I was practicing twelve hour a day in my first year and so I learned a tremendous amount of repertoire from lots of books of music, so I was receiving an education at Julliard, but most of the education was on my own. I am an avid reader and I was reading all this time. Now ... at the end of Julliard was when I started composing and the most influential thing for me, actually, as a composer was that I was an accompanist. I was making a living accompanying all the instrumentalists at Julliard, but also the dancers. My locker was right next to the dance

division and I was fascinated by these good looking people, you know dancers... and one day one of the professors said, "Well, would you like to accompany?" so I ended up accompanying modern dance, Baroque dance and Spanish dance... and there was a guy there called Hector Varaspe who used to be, actually, one of the teachers of Nuriev, back many years ago. I think he was from Argentina ... and also a woman called Janet Soares. I actually went with them on tour to England and she was the modern dancer ... and she used to sit with me and say sight read and I would be sight reading Scriabin sonatas ... and you would think I was improvising stuff. But the Spanish dancer immediately said why don't you improvise something in the classes of Spanish dancing and I was terrified... but during the course he puts you on the spot, "Improvise!" and little by little I did more improvising which was very good for me ...and at some point I wrote something down. He said, "Why don't you put it in writing?" and I did. That was my first piece. That was Reflexiones for piano in 1985. Through him I met Maria Benitez, Spanish dance company, who heard the piece over the phone and they hired me and three weeks later we were playing at the Kennedy Center for the performing arts, my first piece. So I think Julliard was extremely important to me to make that jump from concert pianist to composer. If it wasn't for that it probably never would have happened.

Going back, when I was eight years old I composed something and I played it for my mother and my mother said, "Don't waste your time, play your pieces, practice your pieces." I still remember now, after all this time, the song that I wrote and I never wrote it down... so, I guess, it was in me a long time ago, but...

**Hobbs**: But it was never released...

**Fábregas**: Yes! But, I guess, it was killed, it was calmed down and it never quite happened... and even, I remember, in my twenties I was reading a lot of biographies of composers, before I

came to the States, actually in the 1980s. I was identifying myself with the composer, with their adventurous lives... and then I would say, "Yea, but I am a pianist. I'm not a composer." and I can remember feeling sad about that. You know, it is kind of interesting. Now later on everything came together, because my life has been quite an adventure.

**Hobbs**: It sounds like it!

**Fábregas**: Yea! ... and I turned out to be a composer...

**Hobbs**: What about your connection to vocal music? I know that you have composed for many different instruments, but for my specific purposes what is your connection with vocal music? **Fábregas**: Well, I would say that my instrumental pieces are also vocal. I think I would tell you that I am always going for line and melodies. Melodies are always... for me vocal is everything. Of course, I learned to do development and, you know, work with little motives and all that as a composer, but the line for me ...mmm....

**Hobbs**: Permeates?

**Fábregas**: Permeates the music. Also, I was trying to think, how I started with Lorca. There was the Benitez Spanish Dance company when I met ... and he said why don't you pick out some Lorca and write an opera. Imagine! ... and I picked out Yerma, which is a theatre work and I actually wrote a little opera ... and obviously nothing happened, but I was very interested then...Then I remember going through his poetry, especially *Poema del Cante Jondo* and I was fascinated, because I, like him, had that since of pain. You know, its very... with a sence of longing and darkness, a little bit ... and so I was very close to that and I love his symbolism, because he doesn't say things straight, except, maybe, for the colorful palms of Andalusia, when he talks about the trees or whatever... but most of the time it is internal. I like poetry that is internal... and his expression of his internal feelings and he makes symbols of things, which

gives you a tremendous inspiration... which makes my imagination work... and then I see things... I see images.

**Hobbs**: That is very definitely connected to his poetry. I have read it's not linear. It doesn't really tell a story, but the energy is there.

Now, you started to touch on this a minute ago... but you were saying you read about all the different composers and I read someplace that your compositional style was influence by the music of Bach and Brahms and Bartok and several famous composers.

**Fábregas**: Here I have to go back again and my answer is going to be kind of long. I have to go back to my training as a pianist. Because I am a self-made composer, all my training has been at the piano. I think pianists are very lucky, because they get to study tremendous amounts of literature. We have the largest literature of any instrument and so, basically, I digested every single composer that I performed and without knowing... I looked back... the contrapuntal lines, which is the lines again, very vocal... but I love the darkness in Brahms, I love the lyricism and leaps in Bach and Mahler, obviously the poetry of Chopin. All that is there and my hands were trained to play all this type of music, so that, in the beginning, when I started to play my hands were going, sometimes, in the wrong direction... mainly because it is so hard to keep your fingers ... its like singing, right?... when you're trained to sing a certain kind of music, you are used to that, so its hard to deviate from that... so, basically, I have been influenced by all these composers, but not in a direct manner. It has all been digested and then...the way I understand that somebody creates the musical language is, you digest the stuff and you remember the stuff you like... at least in my case. The stuff I don't like disappears and the stuff that is sifted and stays, that becomes part of my language... tied up with whatever else I had and it comes out a new product, hopefully. So I can say my music sounds... If you are going to ask me, "Is this

contemporary? Is this traditional?" I don't know...because it is all in there mixed in and for me its very hard...I'm not the type of person who sits down at the table and analyze everything ahead of time,. I'm very much intuitive and ...

Hobbs: You put down what comes out initially.

**Fábregas**: That's interesting, originally. I come up with the first idea, I will stop, will look at what I have done and then try to develop that. So that the development, it is an analytical part of it. Even though in these songs, the '92 songs, were the third songs that I wrote. So, obviously, I was not very experienced, so there is not a lot of counterpoint, as much as I use right now.

**Hobbs**: Oh! Is that true?

Fábregas: Oh yea! I use a lot of counterpoint right now. It's...

**Hobbs**: There is some counterpoint in this, too...

**Fábregas**: Yea! There is some, but not as much. Right now I use a lot of counterpoint, but, I think, what is there is the inspiration, I think from the poems and so, basically, when I read the poems, the way I felt...that's what I wrote and also to me it was like tone painting. So if we're talking about the dog that barks...he talks about the dog in here...certain images. I also like to emphasize certain words... more like tone painting. That's what I do.

**Hobbs**: Ok! In your song cycle then, did you relate the songs to each other? Is there a, kind of, overall structure or are they more individually conceived?

**Fábregas**: No! What I usually, and I still do now... I don't think about the overall structure of keys or anything like that, but I... my concern is contrast. So I will have contrasting songs that some how work together. That's what I am concerned with. So I'm not going to have two slow songs, one after the other. I am going to have some variety in tempos, variety in character, hopefully... including variety of length. That's what I am concerned with. So it feels like a

cycle, but not so much in that case. Obviously, I'm not going to have two songs in the same key,

even though I don't know if I did this in the songs of '92. I might have done that. Right now I

try not to.

**Hobbs:** So you vary the keys...

Fábregas: I think this is the last song I used keys. Right now, I don't use key signatures, I just

put accidentals.

**Hobbs**: In the choosing of the poetry, the *cante jondo*... all the poems are related to *cante jondo* 

aren't they, but they are from different works of Lorca? Three of them were from El Poema del

Cante Jondo and one was from Canciones.

Fábregas: Yes! And again, what I would do is I would go through all the poetry and make a list

and see which ones would go together, also. But first of all, before I came up with a final list, I

would pick the top ones. The ones that said the most to me emotionally... I mean, that is exactly

how it went, but then...for example, like "Casida del Llanto" is just so...dramatic... you know,

when he talks about the dog against the wall... it's just very oppressed feeling, so the song tries

to translate that oppression and the soprano going up so high, and all that, is just like howling

and you were saying...

**Hobbs**: Like wailing?

Fábregas: Yes! Like wailing.

Yea! "Un Punto Lejano" is about these two kids talking about a distant point, so they're

very nostalgic. The most Spanish one, "Ay,"... is most obviously Spanish, because "ay" is a

word that is used in *cante jondo*. It means... I don't know how you say that in English.

**Hobbs**: It's, kind of, an exclamation isn't it?

**Fábregas**: Yea! Of pain. So the reason why I picked those is because I just love those particular poems, not any other reason... and then put them together and that is about it.

**Hobbs**: Because they were the poems of his that spoke to you.

Fábregas: Yes!

**Hobbs**: Tell us a little more about the Spanish *cante jondo*.

**Fábregas**: I was just saying to you before, in my particular opinion, I find a parallel between the jazz, the blues, the way they originated and the way the flamenco, the *cante jondo* originated. The blues originated with the black slaves working in the fields and there was the singing...they were singing about their oppression and their miserable lives and their lack of power and then the jazz came out of all that, a whole musical tradition. With the *cante jondo* it is the same thing. The gypsies, which is the race that made *cante jondo* flourish, were a very oppressed people, who were a wandering people. I remember as a small child seeing these carriages in the middle of the forest, with a big fire, still in the late 50s and early 60s and they were most of the time outlawed. The policeman would go after them and put them in jail ... so they were like the homeless people, right now... but they were extremely musical... and then what happened is, these gypsies settled in Andalusia, in the south of Spain and the people lived there and merged with the population and what happened is back in the 1850s there... that's exactly when the cante jondo was born. There was something called the café cantantes which were these original flamenco singers that would go there to sing for some people that would pay them. That was the beginning of the commercial side. Before that *cante jondo* was an expression, again, of pain. They would sing in a familiar... a family reunion, for example... after you would eat, somebody would get up and they started singing and then somebody else would join, you know, and it was just like an expression of pain and many times they would say, "Ay, ma madre... my mother"

**Hobbs**: Improvisational.

**Fábregas**: Yea! Totally improvisational.

**Hobbs**: Like a jazz singer.

**Fábregas**: Yes! Exactly like the jazz... and then in the 50s they started to sing in the *café* 

cantantes... and then, of course, it went on and on and there are very few places, right now,

where you have the original type of flamenco, right now it's being mixed with jazz, actually.

**Hobbs**: Is that true?

**Fábregas**: Paco de Lucia, who is an incredible guitarist, has mixed a lot of jazz... the whole

new school, right now, of flamenco... because the singing, cante jondo, was the original, but

after they started doing it in the *café cantantes*, then they were joined by the guitarists and later

by the dancing and then the whole show was created and that's when it started to have

internationality. So right now, we have whole dance companies that travel with guitarists and

dancers and singers like Maria Benitez. I, actually, went on tour with them for a whole month...

for example the singers have to have a very raspy voice. They are always smoking and drinking

and they, basically, can't talk, they have these guttural types of voices. Anyway, I'm side

tracking here... but *cante jondo*, yes, it is all about expression.

**Hobbs**: And Lorca became very, very interested in *cante jondo*.

Fábregas: Lorca, actually, in 1922, joined forces with Manuel de Falla and created the first

flamenco singing contest in Granada... so imagine how interested he was. He was loving it and

as I said Lorca was always interested in the underdog, people who were oppressed, because

when he came to New York and he wrote the poetry in New York, he started writing poetry

about the blacks and all the poverty level in New York City... so he had an attraction to them.

**Hobbs**: The two song cycles... well, you have written three song cycles now.

Fábregas: Four.

**Hobbs**: The ones I have heard of, you have written for Rachel Rosales.

Fábregas: Yes.

**Hobbs**: What voice type would you consider her to be?

**Fábregas**: She has an incredibly wide range for a soprano, so that she can reach mezzo level.

She can reach very high and very low. She is a dramatic soprano and I think that attracted me,

because I saw my songs as operatic. I always hear my music for large sound. It's not intimate. I

had people do my songs first, 1986 Lorca songs, by somebody who had a very small voice and it

sounded pretty and it sounded good, but it was missing the depth and the power and the drama.

So that was what attracted me to her and I have written three cycles for her, the two Lorca ones

and one based on my poetry.

**Hobbs**: So it is kind of an expression of that "deep soul" that is incorporated in the *cante jondo*.

Fábregas: Yes! I guess so. I didn't think about that, but now that you mention it.

**Hobbs**: The instruments for this song cycle that we are looking at...what was the connection

with the instruments that you chose for this.

**Fábregas**: Well, I could try to invent some incredible connection, but it was no incredible

connection. The Gotham Ensemble, which is based in New York City, wanted me to write a

piece for them for the Discovery of America by the Spanish in 1992, so this piece was written in

commemoration for the 1992 celebrations and the instrumentation was that ... that's what they

wanted... so that's what it ended up being.

Hobbs: Good.

**Fábregas**: There is always a lot of practicality, you know.

**Hobbs**: Yes, in composing, that's true. I mean, sometimes you can't have the luxury of just choosing...

**Fábregas**: Especially when it is your third piece.

**Hobbs**: Is there some advice that you would like to give to me for the performance of these pieces? I guess, that is kind of a broad question.

**Fábregas**: Yes. Let me think about that, first of all I would like it to be spontaneous. I don't like studied performances, where everything sounds like it's not spontaneous, just like *cante jondo*, it has to be spontaneous and sort of impovisatory. Obviously, I like powerful sound. I haven't heard your voice, but..

**Hobbs**: It's bigger than it used to be.

**Fábregas**: I won't be upset if it's not very powerful. I'm just thankful you are doing the songs. Contrast... my songs have a lot of contrast... and many times they have sort of surges, you know, so you start and ... develop a climactic moments.

That's a good question, should we do it Andalusian Spanish or Castilian Spanish? Well, since it's Lorca, I guess I don't mind if you choose Andalusian Spanish.

**Hobbs**: I would have to be informed on the pronunciation ... people have been telling me how to pronounce it in Castilian and that may not be appropriate.

**Fábregas**: Yea! Probably, it's true. The "c"s is always pronounced as "s"s, so for example "thapato" would be "sapato" or "Barthalona" would be "Barsalona."

Hobbs: Ok.

**Fábregas**: The "c"s are "s"s and many times the "e" ends the word, but we don't want to do that, mostly the "c"s are "s"s. So "Andaluthia" would be "Andaluzia"

**Hobbs**: That would be a change. I'm glad to know that. You touched a second on the type of audience that you had in mind...you said you saw them as bigger pieces rather than intimate pieces.

**Fábregas**: It is kind of interesting, because I haven't written a lot of orchestra pieces, mostly because I don't find it very practical. You write one piece and then it is performed maybe once... twice, and I love chamber music, but my sound... the way I always hear it, it's big... including when I play the piano. When I do a singing passage, I always project, so I do think I hear a big sound. These songs, actually,... you probably don't know that, but this piece has been orchestrated and it is in orchestra version.

**Hobbs:** Oh! Is it really?

Fábregas: Yes! So I had a vision of a lot more sound.

**Hobbs**: Wow! That would be interesting to see.

Fábregas: So if you ever want to do it.

**Hobbs**: Yea! If I have an orchestra available. That's exciting to know, though. You don't have it recorded, do you, with an orchestra?

**Fábregas**: I never even gave it to anybody. I think I did it for ...I don't know what I did it for...

I just wanted to, I guess. Maybe somebody eventually will do it.

**Hobbs**: We will have to find out what the possibilities are. Ok. Let me see what we have next. We have already talked about your compositional process. Oh yes, you said this is not one of your cycles that you have really promoted that much. Why is that and what are some of our favorite pieces that you have written?

**Fábregas**: You know, after I said that I was thinking about it, what is the exact reason for that? I think the exact reason is that I had a model of a singer, which is Rachel Rosales and it has

always been hard for me to find other Rachel Rosales, so I would not voluntarily just give it out, thinking they can do it, they can reach up there, they can go down low and they can go so high. So part of it was, I didn't send them places that could be done and I didn't promote it... not so much because I didn't think it was good, now that I am looking at them, I feel they are quite inspired and have a lot of potential. Another minus that I thought, back then, is that it was a Spanish piece. You see when you start writing music...you know, you start getting all these comments...you know, original music type of thing, but I think they are original in their own right, because... what I find in original music is an expression of your own personality, so its not so much that the songs have to sound twenty-first century, but that what you are saying is new and it's a rehash, you know, of things that maybe you are working for, but it's not derivative music. It's an expression of a new personality. To me... for example, Rachmaninoff was not new at all, but Rachmaninoff sounds like Rachmaninoff, he doesn't sound like anybody else. So I have, sort of, been thinking a lot about what original mean and also about Spanish music. Of course, I have just finish writing a big Spanish piece... I was just in Germany last month and I have been writing a couple of Spanish pieces and I am not ashamed of doing that any more. Right now everybody is very interested in anything that is world music and ...

Hobbs: Your latest song cycle that you wrote for Rosales, is it...

**Fábregas**: Yes. *Five Musings for Soprano and Piano*... it's not Spanish. It's very, very internal, very dark, very... the poetry comes from... I wrote it in 1993, but they are reflecting things that happened in my teenage years... very interesting poetry. I finally did it, because my editor at Southern Music, she thought it was really good poetry and that I should really do something with it and I really like that poetry and it has the images also.

**Hobbs**: They were written in English then?

Fábregas: No!

**Hobbs**: They're in Spanish?

**Fábregas**: They're in Spanish, but they have nothing to do with Spanish music. They are

more... I guess it's not a cante jondo thing, but let's go back to one other thing. Spanish

influence is not just the sounds of the *cante jondo*, but in some of the technical elements, because

being Spanish is not just about sound or flamenco dancing or flamenco singing or anything like

that, but some of the technical elements are for example, that I picked up, triplets, their music is

full of triplets and that's extremely Spanish. Then we have appoggiaturas... As I said I am using

typical instrumental configurations such as triplets and grace notes and many times grace notes

that are like four or five notes, it is like they are up... repeated notes that are from the flamenco

dancing, from the stamping on the ground. Ok? And also, I think, my rhythm, the energy in the

rhythm is very Spanish. Then another thing that the dancers always thought, is my music, you

can dance to it. My music has a pulse and I think that is very Spanish and then the lyricism,

because it's the vocal music, the singing. So Spanish music has all these technical elements.

That's always in my music even though they don't sound Spanish. So that's what I was trying to

say.

**Hobbs**: Ok. That's part of your heritage.

Fábregas: Yes.

**Hobbs**: Very good! Let's see what have we not covered.... Oh yes. There is one other thing.

The duende... I've heard the word duende used in connection with Lorca. What is that? ... it is a

Spanish term.

**Fábregas**: Duende is like a little figure that flies around; you know... what would be the

translation in English?

**Hobbs**: Spirit?

**Fábregas**: I'll email it to you later. I'll find the perfect translation, but it is some special

characteristic a person has... of being able to express the essence of cante jondo, so when

somebody says he has the *duende*, he mesmerizes you, he really communicates with you, he

really is able to bring out all the stuff... The duende can be a singer, can be a dancer, can be a

guitarist, anybody that can bring the essence of the *cante jondo*.

**Hobbs**: Is it specifically connected with the *cante jondo* or not necessarily.

Fábregas: It is very Spanish...

**Hobbs**: A kind of connection with the soul that makes you able to perform.

**Fábregas**: Yes, but I don't know if you could use in other countries. I think it is very Spanish,

but, obviously, it could happen in any country in anything, but I think it's a Spanish concept.

One thing I wanted to mention before also is... that another influence of the Spanish

music is that many times I use a modal sound.

**Hobbs**: Oh yes. I wanted to ask about that.

**Fábregas**: And I use appoggiaturas, which is like some Bach, and then I use dissonance for

expression reasons, for example if I want to express pain... obviously, it's consonant and then

sound it is a dissonance...The more dissonance I use the more within a consonant context, it is a

reflection of the pain... I use dissonance for expression and so for example these last songs, the

Five Musings, that I told you about, there is a lot more dissonance, because there is a lot more

pain, more expression, something like that.

**Hobbs**: Right!

**Fábregas**: But not in the way it is used in the early... late twentieth century, which is

dissonance emancipated from consonance. To me when you have dissonance going one after the

other, where there is no contrast, after a while you don't hear the dissonance, you just hear... I think dissonance is very affective in the appropriate place, to make an impact. Otherwise it doesn't make an impact, in my point of view. To me dissonance is an expression, because even in Bach in his appoggiaturas, there were little dissonances there, and that was for expression.

Hobbs: Right!

**Fábregas**: Another element I want to talk to you about, coming from Spanish music, that helped my style is that Spanish music is Impressionistic many times. Look at Iberia the *The Twelve Impressions for Piano*. You know, it's an Impressionistic element there, because Spanish music, the folk part, not the *cante jondo* part, but the Spanish folklore has a lot of Impressionism in there. So what happened is that it lead to octatonism, which is an eight note scale, and whole tone scales, which I use quite a bit in my first cycle, the Lorca cycle. So that came also from Spain and sort of derived from there, into my style. Of course, you are not aware, but I have written two violin sonatas and a flute sonata in octatonic type of style. I am out of that, because it was like a little prison. It is a sound that sort of takes you prisoner and then I got out and now I use it when I want to. It all comes from experience. The more you compose the more you can use what you want to. Basically, I have started doing it full time... not full time, but continuously since 1993. That's when I really started writing.

**Hobbs**: So we have really already talked about what makes your music so expressive.

**Fábregas**: The color, I am very interested in color, so again dissonance and consonance and how you use them gives you color and lately I have been using a lot more changes of keys... not that I use keys, because I don't write key signatures any more after 1992, but I am constantly going to different colors, different accidentals. I am very interested in color and again that is very Spanish.

**Hobbs**: How do you go about setting your text. Do you change the poetry any or how do you go about it?

**Fábregas**: No. I'm very faithful to the poetry, especially since I love it so much. I would never dare to change his poetry, plus I think his family would sue me. I have the rights from both sides, it took me years to get the rights to use the poetry.

**Hobbs**: Is that right?

**Fábregas**: Yea. But I have the rights for that. No. I would never change the poetry, because I think it is perfect. What I do...is for example here, on measure 27 on the first song, "pero el llanto es"... what happens is when I find a word that is very meaningful to me, I will repeat it several times or I'll repeat several phrases the same. I will do things like that but never change one word... consciously. No, I wouldn't want anybody to change my poetry, so I'm not going to change anybody else's poetry.

**Hobbs**: You do repeat words or phrases sometimes, but you keep the poetry in tact.

**Fábregas**: For expression purposes and sometimes for structure, because sometimes you need more words to finish out a phrase, you know to smooth it out... for technical reasons and for musical reasons. I do that.

**Hobbs**: Ok. Let me see... What about the E mode... I've read about the E mode, the mode on "mi," being connected to Andalusian music.

Fábregas: Phrygian.

**Hobbs**: Phrygian mode? The text I was looking at kept referring to it as the E mode, but right.

**Fábregas**: Yea, Phrygian. It is a very old mode and that is the connection with Byzantine and if you are interested in that I may find some background on it, Byzantine liturgy. But, you know, it

goes way back and also with the Jewish synagogue singing... and it's modal, basically, it's not

tonal.

**Hobbs**: Right. Now are some of these songs based on the Phrygian mode or not really?

Fábregas: Not consciously, but again, because I have a sound and maybe we want to talk about

that. I think in terms of sound. I don't think in terms of scales or technical things, so if I come

up and do a Phrygian, later I could say, "Oh, yea. I wrote in Phrygian." but when I start it I just

hear the sound. It's about sound...you know... like when you have a beginning student, what

are you going to say, "Well, I, IV, V..." No, you're not going to do that, because you're never

going to get anywhere with that. It's totally limiting, but once you start thinking in sound you

can do anything you want and after a little bit you can analyze and use it... But inspiration, the

ideas, you never, at least from my point of view, want to think in other things except your sound.

**Hobbs**: How you want to express what you feel inside.

Fábregas: Yes!

Hobbs: Also in the fourth song, "La Luna Asoma"... the introduction of that song is very

similar to a Benjamin Britten piece...

Fábregas: Oh yea?

Hobbs: Yes, from On This Island.

Fábregas: Really. I'm not familiar.

Hobbs: Cause I was just wondering if that was just a coincidence or if you were at all familiar

with that piece.

**Fábregas**: No, and that is one of the dangers when you write music, that there is so much out

there and when you are writing tonally and sometimes people will hear things and they'll say

well I guess so, you know. No, definitely not consciously and I guess I will have to hear the piece

**Hobbs**: But it's a beautiful piece, also.

**Fábregas**: Yea! That was the favorite of the Gotham Ensemble's leader, Tom Piercy. He said that was his favorite piece. Of course, it goes into all this color. It has all these different keys, traveling, and it has this push.

**Hobbs**: And I think it goes lower than the other pieces do, vocally.

Fábregas: Yea! It goes to an A. I can't believe you can reach the A.

**Hobbs**: Well... if I haven't sung too high for too long. Alright, I think that is all the specific questions I have. We will visit more by email.

**Fábregas,** e-mail on September 16, 2003: Here is the explanation of "duende" in my dictionary: "an ineffable, enchanting quality present in some people in certain works of art and literature"

# E-MAIL ADDITION: ANALYSIS BY FÁBREGAS

# FIVE POEMS OF GARCIA LORCA BY ELISENDA FÁBREGAS

### I. Casida del Llanto

- Sections A (m. 1-12) and A' (use the octatonic scale)
- Section B (m. 13-21) uses the Lydian mode.
- Section A' (m. 22 to end) uses the octatonic scale

### Harmony/ Bass melodic outline

- Section A Descending bass line: F sharp, e, d, c sharp (measures 1-12)
- Section B Sostenuto section oscillating and suspensive harmony between e and f in the harmonic bass (m. 13-17) resolving in measure 17 with G.
- Section A'- Expansion of previous descending bass line: F sharp, e, d, c sharp, c, b, b flat, a flat, g, f sharp, f, e, d, c sharp and left unresolved until the beginning of *Un Punto Lejano*.

### Soprano Melodic outline

- Section A tritone is the most important melodic feature.
  - ➤ Measures 1-4 outline the ascending tritone (b-f)
  - ➤ Measures 7-9 descending tritone (f-b)
  - ➤ Measure 10 melody outlines tritone again. (b-f)
- Section B more relaxed melodic outline (no tritone)
- Section A' similar to section A

# Accompaniment

The trills and tremolo accompaniments (m. 15-16) are meant to give a mysterious and tense quality to the music, as well as a continuity of sound and harmonic support to the soprano.

Measure 4 (same in m. 26) – observe parallel tritone chords in piano right hand

The Clarinet accompaniment acts many times as a melodic counterpoint to the Soprano at various intervals underneath (m. 1-4, 10-12, 29-33), in an Alberti bass type (m. 17-21) of accompaniment or tremolo octaves (m. 13-16).

### Pedal points

The piano provides long bass notes that act as pedal points and give support to the harmonies built above.

#### Climax

Is at the end of the piece on measure 32 (the goal of the previous measures) where the registers are the highest (soprano) and lowest (bass) encompassing a wide range of sound and thick texture.

### II. Un Punto Lejano

- Section A m. 1-5 uses the Lydian mode
- Section B m. 6-14 uses octatonic scale
- Section A' m. 15 to end Lydian mode
- Bass melodic outline: b,a,g, e,d and back to b,a,g,f and b.
- Hypnotic piano accompaniment with trills throughout the piece (with Alberti type accompaniment in the left hand in central phrase m.6-13 that outlines the tritone).
- Climax or central climatic area is m. 11 where the registers are farther apart (A flat soprano and lower d piano and cello).

### III. Ay!

Three Sections (Variation techniques)

- Introduction (m. 1-6) and other similar transitional passages (17-19)m (37-46) use the octatonic scale.
- Section A m. 7-16 in the Phrygian mode
- Transition m. 17-22 Octatonic scale
- Section A' (Waltz) m. 23-36 in the Phrygian mode
- Transition m. 37-46 Octatonic scale
- Section A "(m. 47-to end) in the Phrygian mode.

Imitation techniques among all instruments and soprano.

### Use of Appogiaturas

- piano accompaniment: m. 9,10,12,13, 16, 25, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60
- Clarinet: m. 31, 33, 47, 50
- Cello m. 49

#### IV. La Luna Asoma

- Introduction in c-sharp minor Descending bass line that leads to g minor
- Section A in g minor (m. 6) modulating to c sharp minor and back to g minor (m. 14)
- Section A' in d minor (m. 19 modulating to g sharp minor) and back to d minor (m. 25)
- Section A" in a minor (m. 34 modulating to e flat minor and staying in e flat minor).

Climax is at m. 40 the final arrival point of the constant modulation by ascending fifths or descending fourths (c sharp-g - d - a - e flat).

#### V. Fuera

Most Spanish flavor of the set.

Guitar-like opening chords in piano accompaniment (m. 1,2,3)

Sixteenth notes figuration in m.6 -13 (piano), m. 14 (clarinet) and similar passages imitate the air-wind (poetry connection) "gritos abandonados suenan por el AIRE".

Form

Rhythmic motive from which melody is constructed consists of melody in soprano (m. 29-30) and rhythmic variations of it throughout the piece.

Piece built around central theme in measures 29-36.

- Instrumental introduction (m. 1-8) uses octatonic scale.
- Section A (m. 9-20) introducing the beginning of the theme (or rhythmic motive) octatonic scale
- Instrumental development (m. 21-22) in the Dorian mode (m. 24-28) Phrygian mode
- CENTRAL Section B (m. 29-36) introduces the full theme Dorian mode
- Short instrumental transition leading to:
- Coda (m. 44 to end).

## Harmony

Pedal point of G occurs almost throughout the piece acting as key or center of sound over which harmonies are built.

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