

# Gerhard, Roberto : Arnold Schönberg und Roberto Gerhard : Briefwechsel

Gerhard's correspondence with his composition teacher, Arnold Schoenberg, is one of the most extensive and significant of the former's life. It is essential in understanding Gerhard's changing engagement with twelve-tone technique, his thoughts on musical modernism, and his changing place within the broader environment of the Second Viennese School.

Gerhard's initial exchanges with Schoenberg in 1923-4, when the former was in search of a new composition teacher after Felip Pedrell's death, reflect the concerns of a young composer who, unlike most of his contemporaries in Catalonia and Spain, did not feel drawn to the French and Russian avant-garde, but rather to the Austro-Germanic world. Gerhard's correspondence with Schoenberg continued during the early-to-mid 1930s, and show that, even though Gerhard was not practising twelve-tone technique during these years, he had certainly been profoundly influenced by his experiences studying in Berlin and Vienna, and strived to make Schoenberg's music and thinking better known in Barcelona. Gerhard achieved this in part by inviting his former teacher to stay briefly in the city in 1932 and 1933.

Gerhard's correspondence with Schoenberg was interrupted by the rise of Nazism, the Spanish Civil War, and the subsequent exiles of both composers; it resumed in 1944. This late correspondence, which extended until Schoenberg's death in 1954, illustrates some of the challenges faced by both composers adapting to life in exile and music scenes that were not always welcoming. This correspondence also illustrates Gerhard's further experiments with twelve-tone technique from the mid-1940s onwards, which he sometimes discussed with Schoenberg in some detail.

The correspondence between Gerhard and Schoenberg (mostly in German, occasionally in English) is scattered among a number of archives, including Gerhard's archive at Cambridge University's Library, the Institut d'Estudis Vallencs in Gerhard's hometown of Valls (Catalonia), and the Arnold Schoenberg Centre's archive in Vienna. A recent edition by Paloma Ortiz de Urbina compiles all eighty-two surviving letters, including some of the Gerhards' exchanges with Gertrud Schoenberg after Arnold Schoenberg's death.

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## **For further information:**

- Ortiz de Urbina, Paloma (ed.), *Arnold Schoenberg und Roberto Gerhard: Briefwechsel*, New York, Peter Lang, 2019.

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