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| Gerhard, Roberto (b.1896, Valls, Spain - d.1970, Cambridge, England). |
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| Roberto Gerhard studied piano with Enrique Granados in 1915 and composition with Felip Pedrell from 1916-1922, producing a number of important early works including the *Dos Apunts* (1921-2) for piano and the *7 Haiku* (1922 rev. 1958) for voice, wind quartet, and piano. A decisive turning point was his move to Germany in 1923 to study with Schoenberg. Like Alban Berg, Gerhard's use of serial technique was unorthodox. *The Wind Quintet* (1928) uses Schoenberg's technique of continuous variation but uses a tone row of seven notes rather than the usual twelve. Gerhard returned to Spain in 1929 but was forced into exile by the Franco regime; he moved to England in 1939, where he remained until his death. During his period in England Gerhard wrote many of his most important works. These often combine elements of serialism, Catalan folk music, and more sonically driven passages influenced by his work with electronic music. Works from this period include two string quartets, four symphonies, concertos for violin, harpsichord and piano, and an opera; *The Duenna*. Gerhard was the first composer in England to investigate electronic sound. His first work in the medium was for Bridget Boland's play *The Prisoner* in 1954. He continued to incorporate electronic music into a number of scores for radio and theatre productions as well as concert works, including the Symphony No. 3 *Collages* (1960) and *The Anger of Achilles* (1964), which won the Prix Italia in 1965. From 1960 onwards all of Gerhard's major works are in one movement, culminating in a series of large-scale chamber and orchestral works including the *String Quartet No. 2* (1960-62), *Hymnody* (1963), *Epithalamion* (1966), *Libra* (1968), and *Leo* (1969).  Gerhard's musical idiom can be split into a number of discrete phases: the early Spanish works often influenced by Stravinsky and Schoenberg (up to 1922); his early serial work whilst studying in Vienna and Berlin with Schoenberg (1923-28); more folk inspired works on his return to Spain and his early time in England (1929-1951), and finally his mature synthesis of serialism, folk music, and later electronic music (1951-1970). It was while in England that Gerhard's mature style emerged. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s Gerhard experimented with form and time in music, developing his own notion of serialism. His first mature, fully serial composition was the Concerto for Piano and String Orchestra (1951). Gerhard did not treat the twelve tone series as a fixed set but rather adopted a freer hexachordal approach in which the series was split into two six-note groups that provided a resource from which pitch and harmonic materials could be developed. This technique founds its culmination in the Symphony No. 2 (1957-59) in which the series is used not only to control the pitch structure of the work but also the large-scale temporal form. In the late 1950s Gerhard developed his electronic music studio and was one of the few serious composers to work at the BBC Radiophonic Workshop. In his electronic music, which Gerhard preferred to call sound composition, he often used recordings of instruments and his own works as material for further manipulation in the studio. In this respect, Gerhard's approach is similar to Xenakis' early work in the medium, namely the pursuit of an abstract electronic music made from concrete sound materials. As a result of working with electronics Gerhard came to think of music differently. In his notebooks he write 'music is not notes but sonic motion' and that for him, working in the electronic medium had resulted in a 'number of far-reaching morphological changes in the manner of organising sound and it seems to me that these changes are bound to affect methods of composition in the traditional field of instrumental composition as well.' Throughout the 1960s Gerhard's music became less about melody and more concerned with texturally driven layers of sound in time often still serially organised. The epitome of this synthesis of elements in his mature style can be found in the Concerto for Orchestra (1965) and Symphony No. 4 'New York' (1966). At the time of his death Gerhard was working on a fifth symphony.    **Principal works**  Opera: The Duenna (1945-47); Vocal: Cantata (1932), The Plague (1963-64); Orchestral: Symphony No. 1 (1952-53), Symphony No. 2 (1957-59), Symphony No. 3 'Collages' (1960), Concerto for Orchestra (1965), Epithalamion (1966), Symphony No. 4 'New York' (1967); Concerto: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1942-43), Concerto for Piano and String Orchestra (1951), Concerto for Harpsichord, Percussion and Strings (1955-56); Ballet: Ariel (1934), Don Quixote (1940-41) Chamber: Wind Quintet (1928), String Quartet No. 1 (1950-55), Nonet (1956-57), String Quartet No. 2 (1960-62), Hymnody (1963), Libra (1968), Leo (1969); Electronic: Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter (1959), Caligula (1961), Audiomobile 2 'DNA in Reflection' (1963). |
| Further reading:  Atherton, D. (ed.), (1973), Programme book for the London Sinfonietta's Schoenberg-Gerhard series  Bowen, M. (ed.), (2000), Gerhard on Music. Selected Writings. Aldershot, Ashgate  Homs, J. (ed. Bowen, M.) (2000), Roberto Gerhard and his Music, Anglo-Catalan Society, Sheffield  Sproston, D. (2009), Serial Structures in Roberto Gerhard's First and Second Symphonies' in Tempo No. 248: 21-34  White, J. (1993), National Traditions in the Music of Roberto Gerhard in Tempo No. 184: 2-13 |