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| Gandini, Gerardo (1936-2013) |
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| Gerardo Gandini was an argentinean composer and pianist. Disciple and assistant of Alberto Ginastera in the late 50's and 60's, he obtained international recognition for his musical work, comprising more than 120 works for orchestra, small ensembles, musical theatre, opera, and solo instruments. As a pianist, he took part in the last sextet founded and led by Astor Piazzolla. From then on he interpreted and recorded a number of tango arrangements, called ‘Postangos.’ Gandini was also active as disseminator of contemporary music in Argentina.  Gerardo Gandini studied piano with Pía Sebastiani, Roberto Caamaño and Ivonne Loriod, and composition with Alberto Ginastera. From 1962 onwards, he served as Ginastera's assistant professor of composition and analysis at the avant-garde Latin American Centre for Advanced Musical Studies of the Di Tella Institute in Buenos Aires. In 1966, he studied with Geofredo Petrassi at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome. In 1970, he taught composition at the Julliard School of Music in New York. After that he acted as composition professor at the National University of La Plata, the Argentine Catholic University. He taught courses in composition at various institutions in Buenos Aires such as the Goethe Institute, San Telmo and Antorchas Foundations, and Melos Publishing House. |
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Gandini's compositions and career have been distinguished by numerous prizes such as the Buenos Aires Prize for Composition (1960), the Molière Prize given by the French Government for theater music (1977), the Guggenheim Fellowship (1982), the Argentine National Music Prize (1996), the Career Trajectory Prize of the Argentine National Fund for the Arts (1996), the Osella d’Oro at the Venice Film Festival (1998) and the Tomás Luis de Victoria Ibero-American Composition Prize (2008).

As a pianist, Gandini has participated in many international festivals and has been piano soloist at the Argentine National Symphony Orchestra. His performances not only consist of contemporary concert music but also of jazz and tango. In 1989, he took part in the last sextet founded and led by Astor Piazzolla. From then on he interpreted and recorded a number of tango arrangements, called ‘Postangos,’ which helped him to obtain the Latin Grammy prize in 2004. As a conductor, he grounded and conducted the ‘Sinfonietta’ of the Omega Insurance Foundation. He acted also as a conductor of the Buenos Aires Philharmonic Orchestra, and as musical director of the Colón Theatre.

Gandini's concerns as interpreter and conductor are very often associated with his activity as a disseminator of contemporary music in Argentina. He premiered numerous works by other composers. He was also grounder and director of the Center of Experimentation in Opera and Ballet of the Colón Theatre of Buenos Aires, and curator of concert cycles of contemporary music at both public and private institutions in Argentine.

# Works

Gandini developed his musical poetics based on different modes of musical borrowing, mainly by citation or allusion to other pieces, not only of music, but of other genres as well. These references related to his meta-musical approach to his work: Gandini saw composition as the result of a conversation among different works of music, which, when combined, created an ‘Imaginary Sound Museum’.[[1]](#footnote-1) The idea of an imaginary sound museum was the result of the composer's conviction about the exhaustion of the historical period of material experimentation and discovery, and his subsequent shift of compositional concern to the level of musical syntax. This diagnosis has been interpreted by the specialised critic as reception of the crisis of material thinking in European postwar contemporary music, which Gandini shared with other Argentinean composers such as Alberto Tauriello and Marta Lambertini.

Among Gandini’s ample productions as a composer is an important group of his works that comprises elements taken from Robert Schumann’s music. The group includes *Eusebius*, in its versions for piano (1984) and for orchestra (1984-85); *RSCH: Escenas*, for piano and orchestra (1984); *RSCH: Testimonios*, for voice, piano and tape (1984); *RSCH: Elegía*, for piano (1986); some pieces of the *Diaries I-III, 36 Preludes* for piano (1960-87); the *Studies*, for violin and piano (1990); the opera *Liederkreis: una ópera sobre Schumann* (2000) and lastly, *Eusebius II* for piano (2006). The *Fantasie-Impromptu* for piano and orchestra, which premiered inWashington in 1971 and was performed there by the Louisville Orchestra (USA), depicts an imaginary portrait of Chopin by means of a re-reading of the B-flat minor ‘Mazurka’, a Polish folk dance. *Imaginary Landscape* (1988), for piano and orchestra, commissioned by the BBC for the Welsh Symphony Orchestra, has a descriptive aim; its first movement, ‘Description of the waters,’ reworks musical topics by Franz Liszt and Arnold Schoenberg. Works composed in 1991, such as *Mozartvariationen*, for chamber orchestra, and *Rondando en la menor*, for two pianos, recreate gestures and materials taken from Mozart's music.

In 1996 Gandini began to compose Sonatas, of which eight are for piano solo, and one for violoncello. He composed three operas: *La casa sin sosiego* [*The house without calmness*] (1991), with libretto by Griselda Gambaro; *La ciudad ausente* [*The absent city*], based on the novel by Ricardo Piglia (1995), and *Liederkreis, una ópera sobre Schumann* [*Liederkreis, an opera about Schumann*] (2000), with libretto by Alejandro Tantanián. All of them premiered at the Colón Theatre in Buenos Aires.


| Further reading:  (Corrado)  (Etkin, Cancián and Mastropietro)  (Fessel)  (Gianera)  (Lambertini)  (Monjeau)  (Paraskevaídis) |

1. Cf. Gandini, G. ‘Estar,’ *Actas de las Segundas Jornadas Nacionales de Música del siglo XX* (Córdoba, 1984), snp. Repr. in http://www.latinoamerica-musica.net. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)