



SPANISH CLASSICS



HOMS

Music for Guitar and Guitar Duo
Entre dues línies • Soliloquis
Suite d'Homenatges

Àlex Garrobé • José Antonio Escobar



Joaquim Homs (1906–2003) Music for Guitar and Guitar Duo

Entre dues línies for two guitars (1948/1975)	8:49	Suite d'Homenatges for guitar (1941–43)	6:36
1 I. Allegretto	1:20	14 Homenatge a Debussy	1:44
2 II. Andantino	1:47	15 Homenatge a Ravel	1:43
3 III. Tempo di Vals	1:04	16 Homenatge a Pedrell	1:03
4 IV. Larghetto	0:53	17 Homenatge a Falla	2:03
5 V. Andante	1:43	18 Soliloqui IV for guitar (1980)	7:55
6 VI. Vivace	0:32	19 Impromptu for two guitars (1985)	4:33
7 VII. Tempo di Marcia	1:21	Dos estudis for guitar (1978)	4:04
Dos Soliloquis for guitar (1972)	11:40	20 Estudio I	2:14
8 Soliloqui I	4:36	21 Estudio II	1:48
9 Soliloqui II	7:00	22 Diàleg for guitar (1981)	5:14
10 Gèminis for two guitars (1979)	5:02	23 El Color de les Flors for guitar (1996)	2:39
11 Soliloqui III for guitar (1977)	5:14		
Dos moviments for two guitars (1959)	4:55		
12 Moderato	2:28		
13 Animato	2:25		

For three decades, Joaquim Homs (1906–2003) was the leading proponent of twelve-tone composition in Spain. This album, which presents his complete works for solo guitar and guitar duo, also gives an overview of the way in which his career developed over the years.

Homs used to recall how even his earliest attempts at composition showed he had assimilated Wagnerian and Impressionist music, something which led him to experiment with chromaticism and, soon afterwards, with serialism. However, this recording also reveals the extent to which he was influenced by Stravinsky and Bartók during the early years of his career.

His first work for guitar, *Suite d'homenatges* ('Suite of homages', 1941–43), reflects the admiration he felt in his youth for French music, specifically that of Debussy and Ravel. The *Suite* also pays tribute to another of his heroes, Felipe Pedrell, with its arrangement of a Catalan folk tune included in the latter's *Cancionero musical español* (1922), while it ends with a homage to Falla, one of the Spanish composers Homs most admired.

The main point of reference in terms of style and texture

for the suite *Entre dues línies* ('Between two lines', 1948), initially written for piano and transcribed for two guitars by Homs himself in 1975, is Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*. It also pays tribute to Stravinsky in a final march inspired by *L'Histoire du soldat*.

From the 1950s onwards Homs began to experiment with atonality, immersing himself in the music of Webern. The works he produced in this period explore the possibilities of serial development from the starting point of patterns inspired by the latter's characteristic tone rows. *Dos moviments per a dues guitarres* ('Two movements for two guitars', 1959), one of the most abstract pieces on this recording, evokes Webernesque pointillism and reflects Homs's idiom at a moment at which he was approaching artistic maturity.

The premature death of his wife, the artist Pietat Fornesa, in 1967, was a blow from which Homs never recovered. This loss, followed soon afterwards by that of his mentor Roberto Gerhard, led to a radical change in his sound world. From this point onwards, introspection and concision became key elements in his music, while

extended tempi and an exploration of the expressive potential of silence became constants, always underpinned by Schoenbergian theories.

Homs wrote a long series of works which he entitled soliloquies (the first being the *Dos Soliloquis per a piano*, 1972), defining them as 'attempts at dialogue without response'. He composed the highest number of such pieces for cello (his own instrument) and for guitar, whose intimate sound is particularly suited to such expressive devices as *pianissimo* dynamics, subtlety of attack and long silences. The first two examples for guitar, also published in 1972, are based on a single tone row and are to be seen as a unitary work. *Soliloquis III* and *IV*, by contrast, were both conceived as stand-alone pieces (in 1977 and 1980 respectively).

A similarly intimate character is to be heard in *Gèminis* (1979), whose title has a dual inspiration. On the one hand, it is Homs's tribute to his teacher and friend Roberto Gerhard, who wrote a number of works based on the signs of the zodiac. On the other, it highlights the dialogue-like relationship established between the two players as the work progresses. As in some of the other works included on this album, Homs here makes use of ambiguous sonorities, one of the few avant-garde elements identifiable in his work.

Brighter and more outgoing in nature, the *Dos estudis per a guitarra* ('Two studies for guitar', 1978) were composed in the period in which his main focus was the soliloquies for various different instruments and formations. Perhaps because they were written for teaching purposes, however, these studies recall the lighter touch of his post-war works.

Any attempt to understand Homs's body of work as a whole has to take into account the fact that the most

significant part of his production dates from the last 30 years of a life that lasted almost a century. If the death of his wife marked the moment at which he discovered his definitive style, the gradual loss of friends and other important figures in his life was a key influence on his final productive years. In that period, the role of memory in shaping individual reality came to occupy a central place in his thinking: as he once said, 'I am what I have experienced.'

He incorporated this concept into his works in two ways. Firstly, he began to rework intensively pieces he had written decades earlier, and secondly, he translated into music his imagined conversations with lost loved ones. So, in place of a soliloquy, his first work of the 1980s was *Diàleg* ('Dialogue', 1981), based on the idea of two voices interacting in an atmosphere dominated by silence. We find this same conversational form in the *Impromptu per a dues guitarres* ('Impromptu for two guitars', 1985), a magnificent example of the serene beauty and lyricism of his later works.

El Color de les Flors ('The colour of the flowers', 1996) was Homs's final work. Written to commission, it was inspired by a poem written by Ono no Komachi (c. 825–c. 900) – a meditation on the passing of time. The very last notes the composer put down on paper were a little melodic pattern that had recurred in his music since the 1970s. As he himself explained in a letter to the pianist Luciano González Sarmiento, this five-note melody was his way of commemorating the time he and his wife had spent together – her memory burned bright in him until the end of his life.

Àlex Garrobé

Translation: Susannah Howe



Àlex Garrobé

Since winning first prize at the 1990 Fundación Guerrero Guitar Competition and the 1988 Musical Youth of Spain competition, Àlex Garrobé's concert career has quickly developed. He has performed in more than 40 countries in some of the most prestigious concert halls, including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Radio France Auditorium in Paris, the Auditorio Nacional, Madrid, the Palau de la Música Catalana, Barcelona and the Lutosławski Auditorium in Warsaw. He has made recordings for the Harmonia Mundi, Opera Tres and Columna Música labels. His many collaborations as a soloist with orchestra include the premieres of *Mare Nostrum Concerto* by Salvador Brotons, *...di un soffio d'aura* by Agustín Charles and *Concierto de Petrer* by Simone Iannarelli, among others. Àlex Garrobé received a doctorate in art history and musicology from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, and is currently professor of guitar and chamber music at the Catalan Music College (ESMUC). www.alexgarrobe.com



José Antonio Escobar

José Antonio Escobar is one of the most distinguished and versatile classical guitar soloists of his generation – achieving a perfect balance of musical expression with a vast knowledge of various musical styles and periods. He was born in Santiago, Chile, where he graduated with top honours after studying at the Conservatory of Music, University of Chile. Upon graduation, he continued his studies with Franz Halász at the Hochschule für Musik in Augsburg, Germany. Under the influence of his first teacher, the lutenist Ernesto Quezada, he became deeply interested in early instruments of the guitar family. This motivated him to complete his studies by attending early music courses and master-classes with renowned specialists. He combines his interest in early music with the contemporary, paying particular attention to Chilean composers. He has been awarded numerous prizes in leading international guitar competitions, and has appeared widely as a soloist with orchestra and in recital, in addition to making several successful recordings. www.joseantonioescobar.cl

Joaquim Homs (1906–2003)

Música para guitarra sola y para dúo de guitarras

Durante tres décadas Joaquim Homs (1906–2003) fue el representante principal de la escuela dodecafónica en España. Esta grabación, que contiene la totalidad de sus obras para guitarra sola y para dúo de guitarras, constituye una muestra significativa de su trayectoria compositiva.

Homs solía recordar que ya desde sus primeros intentos como compositor tenía asimilada la música wagneriana y la impresionista, lo que le llevó a experimentar con la totalidad de la gama cromática antes de pasar inmediatamente al tratamiento serial. Sin embargo, en esta grabación podemos comprobar también la profunda influencia que Stravinsky y Bartok ejercieron durante el primer tercio de su trayectoria creativa.

Su primera obra para guitarra, *Suite d'homenajes* (1941–43), refleja la admiración que sintió el compositor en su juventud por la música francesa, singularizada en este caso en las figuras de Claude Debussy y Maurice Ravel. La pieza recuerda asimismo a uno de sus referentes, Felip Pedrell, con el arreglo de una melodía popular catalana recopilada por este último en su *Cancionero musical español* (1922) y termina con el *Homenatge a Manuel de Falla*, uno de los compositores españoles que más apreciaba.

La suite *Entre dues línies* (1948), compuesta inicialmente para piano y transcrita para dos guitarras por el propio autor en 1975, toma como referencia el estilo y textura del *Mikrokosmos* bartokiano al tiempo que rinde homenaje a Stravinsky en una marcha final inspirada en la *Histoire du soldat*.

A partir de la década de 1950 Homs inicia la experimentación con el método dodecafónico y se sumerge en el estudio de la música de Anton Webern. Las composiciones de este periodo exploran las posibilidades de desarrollo serial a partir de patrones inspirados en las características series del maestro austríaco. *Dos moviments per a dues guitarres* (1959), una de las piezas más abstractas de esta grabación, evoca el puntillismo weberniano y supone una muestra del lenguaje del compositor en un momento en que este se acercaba a su madurez artística.

La muerte prematura de su esposa, la pintora Pietat Fornesa, en 1967 supuso para él un golpe que nunca acabó de superar. Esta pérdida, seguida poco tiempo después por el fallecimiento de su gran referente artístico, Robert Gerhard, provocó un cambio radical en su universo sonoro. A partir de este momento la introspección y la concisión se convertirán en elementos centrales de su lenguaje. El alargamiento de los tempi y la exploración de las posibilidades expresivas del silencio serán una constante, siempre sobre los supuestos teóricos de la escuela schönberguiana.

Los *Dos Soliloquis per a piano* fueron los primeros de una larga serie de obras con este nombre que el propio compositor definía como "intentos de diálogo sin respuesta". Las dinámicas en *pianísimo*, la delicadeza del ataque y los largos silencios son recursos expresivos que se adecuan especialmente bien a la intimidad sonora de la guitarra. Quizá por esa razón, esta es junto con su instrumento de formación, el violonchelo, el instrumento para el cual más soliloquios compuso. Los dos primeros soliloquios para guitarra fueron publicados, como los de piano, en 1972. Están basados en una sola serie dodecafónica y deben ser considerados como una obra unitaria. Los soliloquios III y IV, en cambio, fueron concebidos como piezas totalmente independientes en 1977 y 1980 respectivamente.

El carácter intimista de los soliloquios encontró continuidad en *Gèminis* (1979), una obra que debe su nombre a una doble circunstancia. Por un lado el autor homenajea a su maestro y amigo Robert Gerhard, quien había compuesto diversas obras basándose en los signos del zodiaco. Por otra parte el título pretende subrayar la relación dialogada que se establece entre los dos ejecutantes durante la obra. De la misma manera que en otras obras incluidas en esta grabación, Homs utiliza aquí efectos de sonoridad indeterminada, uno de los pocos elementos vanguardistas identificables en el conjunto de su obra.

Más luminosos y extrovertidos, los *Dos estudios per a guitarra* (1978) fueron compuestos en el mismo periodo en

que los soliloquios para diferentes instrumentos y formaciones dominaban su producción. Sin embargo, quizá a causa de su vocación pedagógica, estos estudios recuperan la ligereza de sus obras de postguerra.

En realidad el *corpus* musical de Homs resulta difícilmente comprensible si no se tiene en cuenta que la parte más significativa de su obra fue compuesta durante los últimos treinta años de una vida que abarcó prácticamente un siglo. Así, si la pérdida de su esposa marca el momento en el que el autor encontró su estilo definitivo, la progresiva desaparición de amigos y referentes cercanos se convirtió en una constante que condicionó sus últimos años productivos. En ese periodo, el papel de la memoria como agente configurador de la realidad individual pasó a ocupar el centro de su pensamiento; "soy aquello que he vivido", llegó a decir en una ocasión.

El compositor trasladó a su obra esta concepción de la propia circunstancia como resultado de todas las vivencias que la han forjado de dos maneras. Por un lado empezó a reutilizar intensivamente músicas que había compuesto décadas atrás mientras que, en otro plano, tendió a

trasladar a sus obras los diálogos imaginarios que mantenía con los seres amados que el tiempo había enmudecido para siempre. Así, en vez de un soliloquio, su primera obra en la década de los ochenta es el *Diàleg* (1981), configurado a partir de dos voces que interactúan en una atmósfera dominada por los silencios. Esta misma forma dialogada la encontramos en el *Imromptu per a dues guitarres* (1985), una magnífica muestra de la belleza serena y el lirismo que reflejan sus últimas obras.

El Color de les Flors (1996) fue la última obra que salió de su pluma. Fruto de un encargo, está inspirada en un poema de Ono no Komachi (ca.825–ca.900) que reflexiona sobre la espera y el paso del tiempo. Las últimas notas que el compositor escribió sobre un papel pautado son un trazo melódico que se hizo recurrente en su música a partir de los años setenta. Como él mismo revelaba por carta al pianista Luciano González Sarmiento, esta pequeña melodía de cinco notas funcionaba como un sortilejo evocador de momentos vividos junto a su esposa a quien recordó hasta el último momento de su existencia.

Àlex Garrobé

Joaquim Homs is recognised as the leading pioneer of twelve-tone composition in Spain, but the products of his long life and career were always grounded in romantic expressiveness. French impressionism can be heard in his earliest guitar work, *Suite d'Homenatges*, and the influence of Bartók in *Entre dues línies*. His atonal works of the 1950s absorbed the spirit of Webern while still communicating Spanish poetic warmth, but his definitive style emerged after the tragically early death of his wife in 1967, with works such as the *Soliloquies* exploring introspection, concision and silence.

**Joaquim
HOMS**
(1906–2003)

Music for Guitar and Guitar Duo

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| 8–9 | Dos Soliloquis for guitar (1972) | 11:40 |
| 10 | Gèminis for two guitars (1979) | 5:02 |
| 11 | Soliloqui III for guitar (1977) | 5:14 |
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| 20–21 | Dos estudis for guitar (1978) | 4:04 |
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| 23 | El Color de les Flors for guitar (1996) | 2:39 |

Full track details will be found in the booklet

Àlex Garrobé, Guitar
José Antonio Escobar, Guitar **1–7 10 12–13 19**

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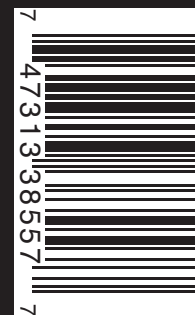


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