

Joaquin Rodrigo (1901–1999)

Concierto de Aranjuez (Movements 1 and 2)

1 Background

Blind from the age of three, Rodrigo was a Spanish composer of works including concertos for guitar, violin, cello, harp and piano, music for theatre and vocal pieces. He began his studies in Spain, but then spent a great deal of time studying in Paris, where he studied with Paul Dukas from 1927 and was encouraged by the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla. Here he also met a number of other composers including Ravel, Stravinsky and Poulenc. Despite writing several widely acclaimed pieces for guitar, Rodrigo was not a guitarist, saying that he could not 'play four notes in a row' on the guitar. However, he was an excellent pianist and violinist.

The *Concierto de Aranjuez* was composed in 1939 when Rodrigo was in exile from Spain, due to the Spanish civil war (1936–1939). It was not his first work for guitar, but the first he had written for guitar and orchestra. Rodrigo and his wife, Victoria Kamhi, met the guitarist Regino Sáinz de la Maza and the Marques de Bolarque (a music aficionado) in Paris and Rodrigo was asked to write a concerto for guitar and orchestra. It was first performed by Regino Sáinz de la Maza in Barcelona in 1940, once the Rodrigos had returned to Spain. The *Concierto de Aranjuez* firmly established Rodrigo's reputation as the leading Spanish composer of his generation and it remains his most successful work.

Rodrigo's lifelong interest in Spanish history is immediately evident in the work. It is named after the royal palace of Aranjuez, 50km south of Madrid, that had been built between the 16th and 18th centuries as the summer residence of the Spanish monarchs. Rodrigo himself said that he wanted to evoke the fragrance of the magnolias, the singing of the birds and the gushing of the fountains, found in the gardens there during the period at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century. This was the time of the reign of Charles IV and Ferdinand VII, when many Spaniards wore traditional dress and bull-fighting was in favour. The *Concierto* has a distinctly Spanish flavour as Rodrigo drew on some of the traditional characteristics of Spanish folk music, especially *Flamenco* and *Fandango*.

2 Instruments

The *Concierto de Aranjuez* was one of the first twentieth-century concertos for guitar and orchestra. The guitar is a relatively quiet instrument, so the problem of balance between the soloist and orchestra must be solved if the concerto is to be successful. However, the orchestra in the *Concierto de Aranjuez* is not particularly small. It consists of 2 flutes (the 2nd doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (the 2nd doubling cor anglais), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets and strings. There are no parts for trombones, timpani or percussion, which would have made it much more likely that the orchestra would have drowned out the solo guitar. The remaining problems of balance are solved by Rodrigo's clear orchestral textures, with generally light accompaniments which often feature solo instruments from within the orchestra. The full orchestra is used sparingly, in passages which do not involve the solo guitar.

There are several transposing instruments used in this work. Candidates will be expected to be able to transpose small fragments of a part played by a transposing instrument, to the pitch at which the instrument sounds.

The following are the transposing instruments in *Concierto de Aranjuez*:

- Piccolo: this part is written an octave lower than it sounds (but candidates will not be expected to transpose any of this part).
- 2 clarinets in B flat: these parts are written a tone higher than they sound (so candidates need practice in transposing down a tone).

- 2 horns in F: these sound a perfect fifth lower than written.
- Cor anglais: like the horns, this sounds a perfect fifth lower than written.
- Double bass: this part is written an octave higher than it sounds (but candidates will not be expected to transpose any of this part).
- Solo guitar: this part is written an octave higher than it sounds (but candidates will not be expected to transpose any of this part).

It should be noted that the trumpet parts are written in C (i.e. at their sounding pitch): Rodrigo does not use the more usual notation of trumpets in B flat. For the string section Rodrigo writes a separate part for the double basses, giving a five-part string texture.

In addition to the transposing instruments, there are some parts which use clefs other than the familiar treble and bass clefs. The violas are written in the alto clef (where middle C is on the middle line). Candidates should practise writing small fragments of this part in the treble clef. The bassoon and cello parts are occasionally written in the tenor clef, when the pitch is too high to be written on the normal bass clef without an excessive number of ledger lines (e.g. bassoon, first movement, 4th bar of fig. 13, cello, first movement, bar before fig. 21).

Ledger lines are also avoided in the violin parts in the third movement from fig. 11 by δ^a , indicating that the notes should be played an octave higher than written. This is then cancelled at fig. 12 by the marking *loco*.

3 Directions in the Score

Most of the performance directions in the score are fairly standard Italian ones. However, sometimes Rodrigo uses Spanish equivalents of the more usual Italian terms, and a few of them refer to specific playing techniques. Directions used include:

- *Rasgueado* (e.g. solo guitar, first movement, b1) means ‘strumming’. This was an important part of baroque guitar technique, but dropped out of use in art music during the 19th century. However, it was always an essential part of Spanish Flamenco guitar technique. The direction *sigue* in b3 (more usually spelled *segue*) means that the player should continue to play *rasgueado*.
- *Arm.* (e.g. solo guitar, first movement, fifth bar of fig. 10): this is an abbreviation, meaning that the note should be played as a harmonic. In this case, the string is indicated by the figure 5 in a circle (i.e. string 5, the A string), and the number 7 beside the note means that the harmonic is produced at the 7th fret; the note produced is an E, two octaves higher than the written note. Rodrigo was not always so explicit in his notation of harmonics (e.g. at the end of the second movement, where the method of producing the effect is left to the player’s discretion).
- *Spiccato* (e.g. strings, first movement, fig. 1): this means a detached style of playing, achieved by using a bouncing stroke of the bow on the string.
- *Col talone* (e.g. strings, first movement, fig. 3 and fig. 22): this means that the heel of the bow should be used.
- *Sordina* (e.g. trumpets, first movement, fig. 12): this means that the instruments should be muted. This direction is cancelled at the fifth bar of fig. 14, where *senza sordina* means that the mutes should be removed. The strings are also muted throughout the second movement.
- *Divisi* (e.g. double basses, first movement, b1) literally means ‘divided’ and indicates that half of the section should play the top notes on the staff and the other half should play the bottom notes.
- *Unis.* (short for *unisono*, found in the bass part in b20) literally means ‘united’ and indicates that all instruments in the section should now play the same notes after a passage in which they have been divided.

- *Pizz.* (short for *pizzicato*) in string parts means that the strings should be plucked with the finger until cancelled by the term *arco*, when the players should return to using the bow (e.g. *pizz.* in the cello part, first movement, three bars before fig.5, followed by *arco* in the second bar of fig. 5).
- *1°* (e.g. in the flute part, first movement, fig. 2) indicates that the printed notes are to be played only by the 1st flute.
- *Cuerda* (e.g. '4.a cuerda' in the 2nd violin part, first movement, fig. 1) means 'string', indicating that the D played by the 2nd violins here should be played on the 4th (G) string.
- *Ben marcato il canto* (guitar part, second movement, fourth bar of fig. 7) tells the guitarist that the melody should be brought out (literally 'marked') above the accompanying chords.
- *Ponticello* (e.g. 1st violin, third movement, fig. 20) indicates that the violins should move their bows to play nearer the bridge than is usual.

4 Techniques

Rodrigo's harmonic language is tonal, but he uses an extended vocabulary of chords, including many discords. Some of these derive from the use of the Phrygian mode in Flamenco music, while others are based (especially in the second movement) on the dominant minor 9th chord. Dissonant chords and dominant minor ninths are common in Flamenco. Modulations are often not firmly established, and the music frequently passes through keys or just touches on them, without becoming explicit. There are pedal points in some passages and use of sequential repetition.

5 Structure and Form

Rodrigo wrote in an essentially neo-classical style and in all the movements he uses his own reinterpretation of classical formal structures. The first movement is in a kind of sonata form, although it does not exactly follow the tonal procedures normally associated with this form. The second movement is in a version of ternary form that includes a substantial amount of development and two cadenzas in the central section. The third movement is in a sort of *rondo* form.

Close relationships between themes are evident in this work. The opening statements of thematic material contain small cells which are then used in a slightly different way to build subsequent themes. This means that the movements convey a strong sense of thematic integration and underlines the debt Rodrigo owed to composers of the classical period.

6 Analysis

Candidates are not expected to know every detail of the following, but should focus on:

- structure
- details of scoring
- significant matters relating to keys and harmony.

FIRST MOVEMENT: ALLEGRO CON SPIRITO

Tonic key: D major

INTRODUCTION

Rather than beginning with a traditional full orchestra statement of the two main themes, the movement begins with the solo guitar playing an introduction. It is accompanied only by *divisi* double basses, playing a tonic pedal, which allows the solo guitar to be heard easily, despite the *pp* dynamic. Although there is a 6/8 time signature, the music uses both 6/8 and 3/4 rhythms, which can be heard as a type of *hemiola* rhythm and is influenced by Flamenco rhythms. The music is very simple, consisting of three bars, which

are repeated, first with the 3rd of the tonic chord at the top, then the 5th, followed by the tonic and the 5th again. Just chords I, II and V are used.

At b19 the woodwind section joins the accompaniment, playing short interjections, derived from the first four notes of the introduction, while the guitar plays a simple quaver figure, based on chords I, II and V, like the opening music.

A *ff* descending scale in the solo guitar in the bar before fig. 1 leads into a repeat of the introduction at fig. 1, played by the strings, this time without the double bass sustained tonic pedal. Instead the cellos play a rhythmicised tonic pedal, as played by the guitar as the bottom note of each chord in the opening.

EXPOSITION

First Subject

At fig. 2 the introductory music is repeated, but it is now an accompaniment to the First Subject of the movement, played by the 1st oboe and 1st violins. The clarinets, 1st horn and 1st trumpet join the lower strings in playing the introductory music.

The upbeat to fig. 3 marks the return of music from the introduction, from b18. However, this time it is played by the full orchestra, with the strings taking the original guitar part and the woodwind and brass playing the short interjections, derived from the first four notes of the introduction. As in the introduction there is a descending scale (one bar before fig. 4), but this time played by violas and cellos, with some initial help from the clarinets and bassoons.

Fig. 4 begins with five tonic chords played by the guitar, as heard at the opening, but this quickly moves into a decorated guitar statement of the First Subject (from fig. 2, originally played by the 1st oboe and 1st violins). Although the outline of the melody from fig. 2 can be seen, the rhythm is very different and it is no longer accompanied by music from the introduction. The accompanying woodwind parts reinforce the addition of ornamentation to the theme. The most important bars from the original version of the theme are the eighth and ninth bars of fig. 2, with the falling tone and falling minor 3rd as these form the basis of the melodic material for this section, with the guitar continuing with fragments of the theme, together with scale passages.

Between figs. 5 and 6 the music begins to move away from the tonic key of D major. At the third bar of fig. 5 the key of B minor (the relative minor) is suggested, with the use of the dominant chord of this key (F sharp major). During this passage the harmonies show the influence of flamenco music.

Second Subject

This begins on the last quaver of the fourth bar of fig. 6. It is still in the key of D major: if following Classical sonata form principles it would be expected that the second theme would be in the dominant (A major). Two bars before fig. 7 the key moves towards E flat and three bars after fig. 7 finally towards A major. At the third and fifth bars of fig. 7 there is a false relation between the 2nd horn and violas. These are often found in Flamenco harmony. At the second bar of fig. 8 the Second Subject is played by the guitar in F major (a minor third higher than before) and the music touches on D flat major one bar before fig. 9 before reaching an E major chord (the dominant chord of A major) three bars after fig. 9.

DEVELOPMENT

This section begins at fig. 10 with an inversion of the introductory theme, in A minor (the dominant minor), rather than the dominant that would be expected after the E major section at the end of the exposition. As if to emphasise this unexpected key, the music is printed with a new key signature, rather than using accidentals.

The introductory theme is not the only melodic material for long. After just 2½ bars Rodrigo adds the First Subject from fig. 2, this time played by a solo cello, with added decoration. The semiquaver decoration in the ninth bar of fig. 10 becomes increasingly important later.

At fig. 11 the guitar returns with the introductory music in A major. However, from the end of the fourth bar of fig. 11 there are suggestions of the First Subject. This statement of the theme is not complete as the orchestra return at fig. 12 and with the guitar move the music towards C major. While the guitar continues with semiquaver decoration from fig. 12 to fig. 13, the flutes enter at the fifth bar of fig. 12 with a shortened version of the introduction.

At the upbeat to fig. 13 the horn enters with a shortened and varied version of the First Subject, which is then passed to the 1st oboe, followed by the 1st bassoon. This is accompanied by the strings playing the introductory theme in A flat major, moving to B major in the sixth bar of fig. 13. Here the 1st violins, followed by the solo guitar, play the First Subject in the version played by the cello (from fig. 10). The key signature is changed back to the original two sharps and B major quickly becomes B minor (two bars before fig. 14).

The second subject reappears at the fifth bar of fig. 14 and is used extensively (with its Flamenco harmony) until fig. 16. This is accompanied by the whole orchestra, with increasingly elaborate material and frequent use of descending scales in the woodwind and solo guitar parts.

RECAPITULATION

At fig. 16 the tonic key returns and the First Subject is played by the oboe and 1st violins, with the introductory rhythm used in the accompaniment. The introduction alone is therefore omitted from the reprise; it only appears as an accompaniment to the First Subject. The guitar enters at the eighth bar of fig. 16 with the answering phrase of the First Subject. The woodwind echo some of the notes one bar before and after fig. 17 (as they did from the eleventh bar of fig. 4).

The ascending D major scale in the second bar of fig. 17 is now played by the flute (rather than the violins in the Exposition at fig. 5). The guitar part from the fourth to the seventh bars of fig. 17 is basically the same as the exposition (the third to the sixth bars of fig. 5), but there are then changes.

Fig. 6 from the Exposition is heard a fifth higher at the eighth bar of fig. 17, leading to the entry of the Second Subject one quaver before fig. 18. In a traditional sonata form movement it would be expected that the Second Subject would now be played in the tonic; however, here it is played by the 1st clarinet in the key of G (the subdominant). This is accompanied by the guitar playing arpeggios and a muted interjection from the trumpets. This interjection is taken from the guitar part in the exposition (the sixth bar of fig. 6), when the guitar played both the Second Subject and the interjection motif.

The piccolo and oboe take over the Second Subject briefly two bars before fig. 19, but at fig. 19 it returns to the clarinet. It touches on A flat major at fig. 19 and returns to the home key of D major at the third bar of fig. 19. The following scale passages and octaves in the guitar, together with the orchestral accompaniment are a complete reprise of what was heard in the exposition. This includes the very brief false relations between the 2nd horn and violas in the third and fifth bars of fig. 19.

One quaver before fig. 20 the guitar restates the Second Subject (as in the Exposition) in the key of B flat major. A complete reprise of the corresponding part of the Exposition follows, but the music here reaches A as the dominant key, ready to lead firmly into the tonic, D major.

CODA

The music resolves onto the tonic at fig. 22 and the quaver figure from the introduction (b19) is played by the strings while the woodwind play a dotted version of the First Subject (from fig. 2).

At fig. 23 there is a cadential phrase, typical of Spanish guitar music, here played by the orchestra and at fig. 24 played by the guitar. The quaver figure from the introduction returns in the solo part at the fifth bar of fig. 24 and the introductory theme appears in shortened form once more, with the first two bars played by the strings followed by the third bar played by the solo guitar. The movement finishes very abruptly, as it began, with the guitar playing the hemiola figure.

SECOND MOVEMENT: ADAGIO

Tonic key: B minor (the relative minor)

FIRST SECTION

The first bar acts as an Introduction, in which an arpeggiated tonic chord is played by the soloist, above a sustained B in the cellos and double basses.

The main theme begins in *b2*. It is five bars long, played by solo cor anglais, accompanied by guitar and solo strings. This plaintive melody is probably the melody by which the *Concierto* is best known. It is possible that the sound of the cor anglais is used to evoke the style of Flamenco singing known as *saeta*. This is heard during religious processions in Holy Week.

During the statement of the theme the bass plays the root of chords I, IV, V and I. The accompanying 1st violin descending scale includes a false relation, the A natural two bars before fig. 1, clashing with the A sharp in the guitar part. At one bar before fig. 1 the violas double the guitar part in decorating the tonic chord.

At fig. 1 the main theme is repeated by the solo guitar. It is now extensively decorated and supported by the full string section. The phrase length and basic harmony are unchanged, but further variety is provided by use of 1st inversions of chords I and IV.

A variation on the main theme is heard at fig. 2. The cor anglais begins a 5th higher than before, but is again accompanied by sustained lower strings and a descending 1st violin scale. The harmony descends from a chord of G major, to F sharp minor and then E minor and there is sequential elaboration of the harmony in the accompanying guitar chords.

As at fig. 1, the variation on the main theme is repeated by the solo guitar (fig. 3), again with decoration and accompaniment from the full string section. It is also slightly extended. When the guitar stops at fig. 4, the orchestra continues the extension of the theme, taking a motif from the end of the main theme and repeating it in sequence (compare the cello part at fig. 4 with the cor anglais part one bar before fig. 3). The motif is then taken up by the violas and 1st violins in octaves.

At the 3rd bar of fig. 4 the key changes to the dominant minor (F sharp minor), but one bar later this is changed to F sharp major (one bar before fig. 5). Here the cor anglais plays a version of the cello motif, while the guitar plays repeated arpeggiated F sharp major chords, preparing for the next section.

SECOND SECTION

This section acts as a kind of Development and falls into two parts:

First Development

The first bar of fig. 5 appears to introduce a new idea in the solo part, over a B major 7th chord, but in the second bar it can be seen to be an elaboration of the repeat of the main theme (compare it with fig. 1, 2nd bar, 1st beat). The harmony then resolves onto an E major chord at the 3rd bar of fig. 5, where the bassoon repeats what the cor anglais played 1 bar before fig. 5.

At two bars before fig. 6 the guitar repeats the first two bars of fig. 5, but now a tone lower, over an A major 7th chord. This resolves onto a D minor chord at fig. 6, where the orchestra plays the first bar of the main theme in the new key.

In the second bar of fig. 6 the guitar once again repeats the first two bars of fig. 5, now a 6th lower than originally, over a chord of D major with a minor 7th and 9th. This chord is known as a Dominant Minor Ninth. The descending triplets played by the guitar at beats 3 and 4 are important to note, as they reappear later.

At the third bar of fig. 6 the key moves on to G minor and the orchestra repeats the first bar of the main theme once again. However, this time it begins one beat later than usual (after a crotchet rest) and the third note therefore has to be shortened.

There is then one more repeat of the first two bars of fig. 5, played by the guitar at fig. 7 and including the descending triplets. This is played over a G major chord with an added minor 7th and 9th (another dominant minor ninth), which resolves onto a C minor chord at the second beat of the second bar of fig. 7. The next 1½ bars involve a rapid modulation so that the key of E minor is reached at the fourth bar of fig. 7.

First Cadenza

Unlike most cadenzas, which are brilliant and showy, this is thoughtful and reflective. It is based on the original guitar repeat of the main theme from fig. 1, but with varied decoration. Since it is a solo cadenza, the guitarist has to provide the accompaniment of arpeggiated chords. For extra clarity the composer notated the passage on two staves, with the melodic writing on the lower staff and the accompanying harmony on the upper staff. Each of the chords has E as the top note, known as an inverted pedal, and this results in often some quite dissonant chords.

Second Development

At fig. 8, beat three, the oboe plays a short plaintive melody over a dissonant string chord, which includes a false relation (upper 1st violin G natural and upper viola G sharp). This is interrupted by the guitar in the third bar of fig. 8, playing an ascending A minor scale in triplets, over the dominant of A minor (E) in the cellos and double basses.

The oboe then repeats the melody a tone lower, again accompanied by dissonant strings with a false relation (F natural / F sharp). Once again the guitar interrupts, with a slightly modified triplet passage. This becomes an ascending G minor scale over the dominant (D) in the cellos and double basses.

The woodwind then play a version of the triplet figure from the second bar of fig. 6 and this becomes broken up, to be shared around the woodwind and brass and finally passed to the bassoon. This takes place over a 1st inversion E major chord, with added minor 7th and 9th (another dominant minor ninth) in the strings.

Second Cadenza

Though based on the same material as the First Cadenza, the Second Cadenza sounds like a more traditional virtuosic cadenza. It also sounds improvised, despite the fact that it is fully notated. It is accompanied by a change in key signature to four sharps (C sharp minor), but the first section pivots around the note G sharp. The climax at fig. 11 is accompanied by pizzicato unison G sharps in the strings and the guitar strumming an F sharp minor chord (with alternating top note of A and G sharp) over a G sharp pedal.

THIRD SECTION

This serves as a Recapitulation, starting four bars after fig. 11. However, it is not in the tonic key (as would be expected), but in the Dominant (F sharp minor), complete with a change of key signature to three sharps, rather than the two with which the movement began. The first five bars of the main theme (originally played by cor anglais) are now played in octaves by violins and violas. It is accompanied by the woodwind echoing

the first three notes of the theme and the bass playing the accompaniment from the guitar repeat of the theme (from fig. 1).

At the ninth bar of fig. 11 the music is based on the variation of the main theme from fig. 2, starting on a chord of D major. The melody is further varied, but retains the basic outline and the harmony descends as before (now D major, C sharp minor, B minor).

At fig. 12 the cello motif from fig. 4 returns, but it is now played by the 1st flute. At the third bar of fig. 12 the guitar plays a variation on the beginning of fig. 5, but now contrapuntally in two parts and with much greater use of triplets.

CODA

The last five bars of the movement finally take the music back to the tonic (although the key signature of three sharps remains). The bassoon and cor anglais play the start of the motif from the bar before fig. 5, which is then played in full by the solo guitar over a dominant chord (F sharp major). This resolves onto B major (a *Tierce de Picardie* – the major version of the minor tonic of the movement) with a rising B major arpeggio in the guitar. Here there are many harmonics: natural harmonics in the violas and cellos, false harmonics in the violins, in addition to the harmonics in the solo part.