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THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR IN THE WORK OF SILVESTRE REVUELTAS¹

Luis Velasco Pufleau
(SALZBURG)

THE ANTI-FASCIST COMMITMENTS of the Mexican composer Silvestre Revueltas (1899–1940) to the Spanish Republic was part of the immense international movement in support of the republican cause after the *coup d'état* at the origin of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). In Mexico, this cause federated a large number of politicians, intellectuals and artists, most of them grouped together under the Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios² (LEAR) and the Mexican Popular Front³ (MPF). As dictated by the ideological line of the Comintern, in the eyes of the LEAR — Silvestre Revueltas presided over its Executive Committee between May 1936 and February 1937⁴ — the

¹. Certain ideas of this article have been exposed previously in VELASCO PUFLEAU, Luis. 'Musique et antifascisme: Silvestre Revueltas dans le contexte de la Guerre civile espagnole', in: *Textuel*, no. 63 (2010), pp. 77–93; or in ID. 'Silvestre Revueltas y la LEAR: música, identidad y acción política en el México postrevolucionario', 'Honourable mention' in the 2011 Otto Mayer-Serra Award for Music Research, University of California Riverside and the Center for Iberian and Latin-American Music (CILAM). I would like to thank Mark Chapman for the English translation of this text.

². The League of Revolutionary Writers and Artists was an organisation of anti-fascist Mexican intellectuals and artists close to the Mexican Communist Party (MCP) [Partido Comunista Mexicano, PCM] and the Comintern. It was organised into many 'sections' (literature, music, visual arts, cinema, pedagogy, theatre, architecture and sciences). Active from 1934 to 1938, the LEAR's mission was the instigation of class struggle by artistic creation to create a more just society under the Marxist ideology. Upon its foundation in 1934, it defined itself as a «*Frente Único* organisation at the service of the working class against the current capitalist system and its dire consequences of crisis and degeneracy, with the repercussions of fascism, imperialism and war». From 1936, it acted in support of the global anti-fascist struggle and actively worked with the post-revolutionary Mexican regime. For the history of the LEAR, see ID. 'La Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios (LEAR): l'antifascisme communiste au Mexique', in: *Aden*, no. 10 (2011), pp. 184–204.

³. The MPF [*Frente Popular Mexicano*, FPM] was a political formation which grouped together a large syndical base in order to support the reforms of the progressive government of Lázaro Cárdenas and to transform the post-revolutionary regime in a Marxist perspective.

⁴. Silvestre Revueltas was involved in communist anti-fascism at the heart of the LEAR between 1935 and 1938. After having left the presidency of the Executive Committee, he became responsible for the

Spanish Civil War constituted the field of battle where the choice between fascism and communism was taking place, at a time when democracies were weakening, faced with imperialism and the decadence of capitalism. From 1936, almost all of Revueltas' prolific work, outside of his cinematographic production, was directly linked with his anti-fascist commitment to the victory of the Spanish Republic. Spain is present in his musical works until his final artistic projects, for example, the music for a piece of political theatre which was to put Franco and Mussolini on stage, *Este era un rey*, and was left unfinished when he died on 5 October 1940.

This article analyses the historical and sociopolitical conditions of Silvestre Revueltas' anti-fascist actions and the direct presence of Spain, at war with itself, in two of his lesser-known works: the anthem for the Mexican delegation of the LEAR in Spain, *Mexico en España*, and his militant piece, *Un canto de guerra para los frentes leales*.

SILVESTRE REVUELTAS, THE LEAR, AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Generally, the commitment of the Mexican state, intellectuals and artists to the Second Spanish Republic during the Civil War originated from two converging phenomena, one of which was Lázaro Cárdenas's government's identification with the government of the Spanish Popular Front (SPF), exacerbated by the threat of a military uprising in Mexico due to the hostility of a section of the army and some conservative political factions towards the social reforms undertaken by the Cárdenas government, mirroring the situation in Spain. The other was the influence of Marxist ideas promoted by the Mexican Communist Party (MCP) and the Comintern among Mexican artists and intellectuals during the 1930s. In the wake of the military uprising, those at the head of the National Revolutionary Party⁶ (NRP) issued a statement in support of the republican government containing a telling empathy with some national issues:

Music section until June 1937, the date of his departure for Spain with the League's delegation to support the Republic which was at war.

⁵. Lázaro Cárdenas (1895-1970), General and President of Mexico from 1934 to 1940. He declared his government to be of a socialist nature and expropriated a large number of industries (oil, minerals, electricity) from foreign companies. In 1936, he authorised the political asylum of Leon Trotsky and, in 1939, the welcoming of Spanish republican exiles.

⁶. Founded in 1929 by the former president Plutarco Elías Calles, the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR) was the hegemonic post-revolutionary party. In 1938, it became the Party of the Mexican Revolution (Partido de la Revolución Mexicana, PRM) then in 1946 the Institutional Revolution Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI), staying in power until 2000 and then returning to government in 2012. For the history of the Mexican state, see MEDINA PEÑA, Luis. *Hacia el nuevo Estado. México, 1920-2000*, Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994 (Sección de obras de política y derecho).

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The National Revolutionary Party, defender of those regimes who identify with the working classes, desires the definitive consolidation of the Spanish government at a time when it is threatened by betrayal from some in the military. The democratic victory of a government that is hostile to ancient privileges would concretise the social reforms which unite our nations, intimately linked by historical destiny and by the fight against all forms of inhumane exploitation⁷.

The Soviet Union and Mexico were alone in refusing to recognise the putschist generals' government, and they decided to openly support — for different reasons — the Second Spanish Republic in war. For the artists and intellectuals of the LEAR, Mexico's alignment alongside the Soviet Union's international policy was a guarantee of the Cárdenas regime's revolutionary character. This meant that the protection of the Spanish Popular Front (SPF) became of the utmost importance for the Mexican Popular Front (MPF), and for the reforms that the government was undertaking, notably the heavily anticipated agrarian reforms that had been hoped for since the Mexican Revolution. From August 1936, the LEAR expressed its support for the Second Republic and the Spanish people, dedicating the fifth issue of its paper *Frente a Frente* to them, naming the edition *¡Viva España Roja!*:

These are tragic times for Spain; the forces of the past have rebelled, trying to oppose the course of history through crime. The Spanish Popular Front fights heroically against the traitors and their natural ally, fascism. The revolutionary artists and writers of Mexico are rallying their most energetic protest to that of all honest men in the universe against the fascist criminal attack which is making the Iberian Proletariat bleed, and they convey their fraternal and enthusiastic support and deep faith in the final victory [of the SPF]. Triumph must be for those who fight and die to break the age-old domination of the oppressors⁸.

7. «El Partido Nacional Revolucionario, defensor de regímenes identificados con las clases trabajadoras, expresa su deseo de la consolidación definitiva del gobierno español, en este momento en que es amenazado por la deslealtad de los militares. La victoria democrática de un gobierno que amenaza los antiguos privilegios consumaría las reformas sociales que unen a nuestras naciones, íntimamente ligadas por el destino histórico y por la lucha contra toda forma de explotación inhumana», in: *El Nacional*, 19 July 1936, reproduced in OJEDA REVAH, Mario. *México y la Guerra civil española*, Madrid, Turner, 2004, pp. 103-104.

8. «España vive en esta hora momentos trágicos: las fuerzas del pasado se han rebelado, intentando oponerse por el crimen al curso de la Historia. Contra los traidores y su aliado natural, el fachismo [sic], lucha heroicamente el Frente Popular Español. Los artistas y escritores revolucionarios de México unen su más enérgica voz de protesta a la de todos los hombres honrados del universo, contra la criminal agresión fascista [sic] que sangra al Proletariado Ibero [sic] y transmite al valiente pueblo su fraternal y entusiasta adhesión, su fe profunda en la victoria definitiva. El triunfo ha de ser de aquellos que combaten y mueren por romper el dominio secular de los opresores»; *Frente a Frente*, no. 5, 2ª época (August 1936), p. 2.

For the LEAR, the international anti-fascist struggle constituted the field of battle for the consolidation of the social advances that Mexico had achieved. Thus, the armed conflict in Spain rallied the writers, painters and musicians of the LEAR around one common objective: the victory of socialism over fascism, and the advent of the new humanism heralded by communism. Considering themselves to be fighting the same battle, the members of the LEAR identified with the Spanish intellectuals and expressed a discourse of fraternity, forgetting the colonial past endured over three centuries by the former *Nueva España*.

The assassination of the poet Federico García Lorca barely a month after the war had begun was interpreted by the LEAR as the macabre demonstration of the danger that fascist brutality represented for the world and for the arts. This assassination caused great indignation at the heart of the League and across the Western world. Silvestre Revueltas reacted immediately to the loss of the Andalusian poet; within weeks he had composed his *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca* for chamber orchestra. This marked the intensification of his political activism and the beginning of a sustained artistic activity against fascism. From this point on, Spain became the country where the future of new humanity was to be decided, sharing its revolutionary destiny with that of Mexico. The figures of Federico García Lorca and Spain at war with itself play a central role in his anti-fascist work; they are symbols of the spirit crushed by barbarism, of poetry destroyed by war.

On 9 April 1937, Pablo Neruda, the Latin American delegate of the International Association of Writers for the Defence of Culture⁹, addressed an invitation to the LEAR to send a representative to participate in the Second International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture¹⁰. The letter announced that this important event would, in principle, take place in Valencia (Spain) in July of the same year. The invitation stirred such enthusiasm in the Mexican anti-fascist League that, from June 1937, a delegation was prepared for Spain to take part in the Second International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture¹¹ and to support the Republic through a series of anti-fascist political and artistic actions. The delegation was presided over by José Mancisidor¹² and consisted of

⁹. This association was created during the first Congrès des écrivains pour la défense de la Culture (Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture), which took place in Paris, June 1935.

¹⁰. He sent the same invitation to Nicolás Guillén and Juan Marinello, also members of the LEAR and friends of Silvestre Revueltas, who represented Cuba at the Congress (see the LEAR archives of the Leopoldo Méndez Fund, CENIDIAP/INBA, Mexico).

¹¹. On the Second International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture, see *II Congreso internacional de escritores para la defensa de la cultura (1937)*, edited by Manuel Aznar Soler and Luis Mario Schneider, 3 vols., Valencia, Conselleria de Cultura, Educació i Ciència, 1987 (Homenajes).

¹². José Mancisidor (1894–1956), Mexican writer and historian, member of the MCP, author of *La ciudad roja* (1932), *Nueva York revolucionario* (1935) and *Síntesis histórica del movimiento social mexicano* (1940). As president of the LEAR's Executive Committee, he dogmatically followed the dictum of the MCP.

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the writers Octavio Paz¹³ (accompanied by Elena Garro¹⁴), Juan de la Cabada¹⁵ and María Luisa Vera; the visual artists Fernando Gamboa¹⁶ and José Chávez Morado¹⁷; as well as Silvestre Revueltas — who was responsible for the LEAR's Music section.



ILL. 1: the LEAR delegation in Spain. From left to right: Juan de la Cabada, Elena Garro, Octavio Paz, José Mancisidor, Pascual Pla y Beltrán, Fernando Gamboa, Susana Gamboa and Silvestre Revueltas¹⁸.

¹³. Octavio Paz later renounced all collaborations and affinity with the LEAR: «If I deplored the attitude of the League of Revolutionary Writers and Artist, I was more disgusted by the rhetoric of its poets and writers. From the beginning I refused to accept the jurisdiction of the Communist Party and its party leaders in questions of art and literature»; PAZ, Octavio. *Itinerario*, Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993 (Tierra Firme); English translation by Jason Wilson, *Itinerary*, London, Menard Press, 1999, p. 43.

¹⁴. The Mexican writer Elena Garro (1920–1998) married Octavio Paz just before leaving for Spain. She received the Prix Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz in 1996.

¹⁵. Juan de la Cabada (1901–1986), Mexican writer, member of the MCP, author notably of *Incidentes melódicos del mundo irracional* (1944) and screenwriter, along with José Revueltas, of the Luis Buñuel film *La ilusión viaja en tranvía* (1953); President of the LEAR Executive Committee from 1935 until May 1936.

¹⁶. The Mexican painter and museographer Fernando Gamboa (1909–1990) studied at the San Carlos Academy and worked with the Ministry for Public Education (SEP). In 1939, he was one of those who were responsible for the welcoming of Spanish republicans to Mexico — his wife Susana, also a painter, worked with him in organising their reception.

¹⁷. José Chávez Morado (1909–2002), Mexican painter, member of the MCP, the LEAR and the *Taller de Gráfica Popular*. Author of many murals, including *La lucha antiimperialista* (1936) at the *Escuela Normal de Jalapa* (Jalapa School of Education) in the state of Veracruz.

¹⁸. Source: *Acervo Documental Silvestre Revueltas*, edited by Roberto Kolb and Eugenia Revueltas, Mexico, UNAM, 1996.

Some of the writers from the LEAR delegation — José Mancisidor, Octavio Paz and Carlos Pellicer¹⁹ — arrived in Spain from the end of June to participate in the Congress of Writers, which was eventually held in Valencia, Madrid and Paris from 4 to 18 July 1937. Silvestre Revueltas and the rest of the delegation joined them in Paris in early July due to problems with the maritime crossing. Without waiting until the end of the Congress, Revueltas and certain other members of the delegation left for Spain in order to organise their anti-fascist activities. On 16 July 1937, the day of his arrival at the Spanish border, he wrote in his diary: «At this moment, we are fighting all over Spain. Thousands of indomitable souls are defending a noble cause with bravery, with hope. Stoically. Full of confidence in a new life, their eyes full of the future»²⁰.

The LEAR delegation was received in Spain in a fraternal climate towards a Mexico governed by Cárdenas, one of the few to provide the Spanish Republic with military support and its defender before the SDN²¹. In fact, the government of Barcelona offered an homage to Mexico on 8 July, thanking President Cárdenas for «the moral and material support given to the Republic in the struggle against fascism»²². The Mexican ambassador to Spain reaffirmed his country's support to the Republic, stating that «the government of Mexico respects international law and rights and, as a result, offers aid to a government legitimised by parliamentary elections in which all ideological currents of opinion participated»²³.

After the close of the Congress, the whole delegation regrouped in Spain and, between July and October 1937, completed a series of political and artistic activities in support of the Spanish people and the war-gripped Republic, organised by the Alianza

¹⁹. Also invited by Neruda, the Mexican poet Carlos Pellicer (1897-1977) was a former member of the literary group *Los Contemporáneos* (1928-1931).

²⁰. «En estos momentos se combate en toda España. Miles de almas indomables defienden una noble causa con valor, con esperanza. Estoicamente. Ilusionados por una nueva vida; llenos los ojos de porvenir»; *Silvestre Revueltas por él mismo*, edited by Rosaura Revueltas, Mexico, Era, 1989, p. 92. During his stay in Spain, Silvestre Revueltas wrote down all of his impressions and reflections in the form of letters to his wife, who remained in Mexico. «These letters, my love, seem to be becoming a travel diary» («Estas cartas, mi amor, parecen convertirse en un diario de viaje»), he wrote to his wife from Paris on 12 July 1937 (*ibidem*, p. 80).

²¹. In Mexico City, on 5 October 1937, a group of MPs presents a motion before the Mexican Chamber of Representatives, proposing to leave the SDN as a sign of protest towards its attitude to the Spanish Civil War (see *ABC*, Madrid, 6 October 1937, p. 6).

²². «Por el apoyo moral y material prestado a la República en la lucha contra el fascismo»; *ABC*, Madrid, 9 July 1937, p. 9.

²³. «El gobierno de México es respetuoso con el Derecho y las leyes internacionales y, por consiguiente, presta su ayuda a un gobierno cuya legitimidad está refrendada por unas elecciones parlamentarias, a las que concurrieron todas las fueras de la opinión española»; *ABC*, Madrid, 10 July 1937. (The Mexican ambassador to Spain was Ramón Negri.)

de Intelectuales Antifascistas²⁴ (AIA), the Consejo Central de la Música²⁵ and the Spanish Society of Friends of Mexico (Asociación Española de Amigos de México). They took the form of concert-lectures, conferences, poetry readings, exhibitions and official political demonstrations in the cities of Valencia, Madrid and Barcelona. During his stay, Silvestre Revueltas composed the Mexican delegation's anthem, *Mexico en España*, and conducted his pieces *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca*, *Caminos*, *Redes*, *Janitzio*, *El renacuajo paseador* and *Colorines* with great success²⁶.

At the beginning of August, the delegation took itself to the republican front of Pozo Blanco, in the province of Córdoba in order to support a republican brigade commanded by the Mexican colonel Juan B. Gómez. Upon his return from the front, Revueltas wrote: «over some days I have experienced what my life might have been if music, art and everything else had not led me down other paths»²⁷. Silvestre's brother, the writer José Revueltas, was sure that the composer would have tried «to stay in Colonel Juan B. Gómez's batallion, at the head of a small and anonymous military band, in the line of fire»²⁸.

Regardless, Revueltas was profoundly affected by his time on the republican front. He became conscious of what the Spanish Civil War meant in an international context, and the distance between the interests of the people and those of politicians and foreign spectators. He reaffirmed his class identity, aligning himself with the people and to what he considered to be their qualities:

I have returned from Pozo Blanco and I find everything strange, distant, almost hostile... [...] For some — the professional politicians, the connoisseurs

²⁴. Alliance of Anti-fascist Intellectuals, created in August 1936.

²⁵. The Central Music Council — founded in July 1937 under the supervision of the General Direction of the Arts with assistance from members of the Music section of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas* — was charged with organising the musical activity of the Republic. Its main mission was, on one hand to «increase the public music base so as to give the masses access to the privileged medium of grand music», and on the other hand to «stimulate musical creation while assuring that the correlation of the artist with this magnificent people is distant, which will lend him new elements for the constant renewal of his art» («en primer lugar, ampliar la base del público musical dando acceso a las masas populares a ese medio privilegiado de la gran música, y en segundo lugar, de estimular la labor de creación musical, asegurando la convivencia del artista creador con ese pueblo maravilloso y pródigo que le prestará los elementos frescos para una renovación continua de su arte»); RENAÚ, José. 'Misión del Consejo Central de la Música', in: *Música*, no. 1 (January 1938), pp. 7-8.

²⁶. For a complementary description of Revueltas's activities in Spain, see HESS, Carol. 'Silvestre Revueltas in Republican Spain: Music as Political Utterance', in: *Latin American Music Review*, XVIII/2 (1997), pp. 278-296.

²⁷. «Por unos días viví lo que hubiera sido mi verdadera vida si no me hubiera llevado por otros rumbos la música, el arte y todas esas zaranjadas [sic]; *Silvestre Revueltas por él mismo*, op. cit. (see note 20), p. 101.

²⁸. «Intentó quedarse en el batallón del coronel Juan B. Gómez, al frente de la pequeña, anónima banda militar, en las mismas líneas de fuego»; REVUELTAS, José. 'Apuntes para una semblanza de Silvestre Revueltas', in: *Las evocaciones requeridas*, Preface by Philippe Cheron, edited by Andrea Revueltas, 2 vols., Mexico, Era, 1987 (Obras completas, 25-26), vol. II, p. 311.

of international politics, the intelligentsia — the struggle of the Spanish people is only an interesting spectacle, magnificent even: a stimulant for the old hysterical and damaged ones, an inestimable means of progressing politically. For the people it is a silent and intimate grief, a hope, a thing without contemplation, proper, just. No-one understands anything of it except them; those who fight and those who suffer, who will continue to fight and to suffer as long as this clique of bastards exists, they who profit even from the air their victims breathe, from the ground on which they walk, from the light of their pupils, all to reach their objectives of personal comfort, pleasure and opulence. I hate civilisation. Civilisation! In our contemporary world, civilisation means baseness, intrigue and good manners which attempt to conceal perfidy and dishonesty. The people are not civilised. They are straight, generous and without hypocrisy; they are honest. They have no aesthetic refinements, but are loyal and proper. Civilisation is sophisticated and dirty; it needs a chamber pot for each of its acts. *Civilisation* is shit distilled, bottled up and legalised²⁹.

MÉXICO EN ESPAÑA

On his return to Valencia, Revueltas composed the anthem for the Mexican delegates of the LEAR, *Mexico en España*³⁰, based on a text by the Spanish poet Pascual Pla y Beltrán³¹. The piece, which was composed in Madrid on 17 September 1937, was dedicated to colonel Juan B. Gómez and published in the second supplement of the *Cancionero Revolucionario Internacional*. The *Cancionero* was compiled by the Spanish musicologist of German origins, Otto Mayer-Serra, and edited in Barcelona by the Sección de Música del Comisariado de Propaganda de la Generalitat de Cataluña late in 1937. The first issue of the Spanish paper Música dedicated a reading note to him:

²⁹. «He regresado de Pozo Blanco y todo lo encuentro extraño, alejado, casi hostil [...] La lucha del pueblo español es para algunos, los políticos profesionales, los *connaisseurs* de la política internacional, la *intelligentsia*, sólo un espectáculo interesante y hasta magnífico; un excitante para viejas históricas y usadas, un inapreciable medio para medrar políticamente. Para el pueblo es un dolor callado e íntimo, una esperanza, algo sin contemplaciones, limpio, justo. Esto nadie lo entiende sino ellos: los que combaten y los que sufren, que combatirán y sufrirán mientras exista esa pandilla de cabrones que se aprovechan hasta del aire que respiran sus víctimas, hasta del suelo que pisan, hasta de la luz que miran, para lograr sus propósitos de comodidad personal, de placer, de holgura. Odio la civilización. ¡Civilización! La civilización en nuestro mundo actual significa doblez, intriga, buenas formas, buenas maneras que solo tratan de ocultar la perfidia y la deshonestidad. El pueblo no es civilizado. Es recto, generoso y sin tapujos; es honrado. No tiene refinamientos estéticos, pero es leal y limpio. La ‘civilización’ es refinada y sucia; necesita un bidet para cada uno de sus actos. La ‘civilización’ es mierda destilada, embotellada y de curso legal»; *Silvestre Revueltas por él mismo*, *op. cit.* (see note 20), pp. 116–117.

³⁰. REVUELTAS, Silvestre. ‘México en España’, in: *Cancionero Revolucionario Internacional*, edited by Otto Mayer, 2 vols., Barcelona, Comissariat de Propaganda de la Generalitat de Catalunya (Secció de Música), 1937, **vol. I** ????, pp. 5–7.

³¹. The Spanish poet Pascual Pla y Beltrán (1908–1961), author of *Poesía Revolucionaria (Antología: 1932–1936)*, is a member of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas*.

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ILL. 2: Silvestre Revueltas at the Pozo Blanco front, August 1937³².

Otto Mayer is compiling into some supplements, carefully edited by the Propaganda Commissariat of the Generalitat, the revolutionary songs which have emanated from, this bellicose hour for Spain. [...] This second supplement makes the *Cancionero Revolucionario Internacional* — chords and verses illuminated by popular emotion — a historic repertoire that bears witness to our people who are living under the fracas of arms and the pain of invaded homes. It is prestigious thanks to the names of Revueltas, Eisler, Palacio, Halffter (Rodolfo), Dunailevski and Casal Chapí; these are masters of their art, full of inspiration and revolutionary fervour, along with the poets who also feature: Pla y Beltrán, Herrera Petere, Luis de Tapia, Aparicio, Brecht and Ramos³³.

³². Source: *Acervo Documental Silvestre Revueltas*, op. cit. (see note 18).

³³. «Otto Mayer viene recopilando, en cuadernos cuidadosamente editados por el Comisariado de propaganda de la Generalidad, las canciones revolucionarias que se han prendido, con un más ahincado acento, de esta hora bélica de España. [...] Los nombres de Revueltas, Eisler, Palacio, Halffter (Rodolfo), Dunailevski y Casal, maestros llenos de inspiración y entusiasmo revolucionarios, conjuntamente con los de los poetas Pla y Beltrán, Herrera Petere, Luis de Tapia, Aparicio, Brecht y Ramos, prestigian este segundo

The lyrics to the anthem for ‘Mexican Fighters in Spain’ contains references to Anahuac Valley, where Mexico City was built on the ruins of ancient Tenochtitlan. The valley is referenced as the common origin of the members of the LEAR delegation. The mission is also declared to be historic: the mission to succeed together in the fight against fascism in Spain, where the future of humanity is to be decided. The lyrics also construct symbolic references and a common destiny for the members of the delegation. The second stanza glorifies the combat, insisting on the impossible victory of death ahead of the advance of Spain.

México en España

Dejamos las tierras de verde maíz;
del Valle de Anáhuac vinimos aquí,
A ganar con la sangre una vida sin par,
que forje la aurora de la Humanidad.
A ganar con la sangre una vida sin par,
que forje la aurora de la Humanidad.

We have left the lands of green corn;
From the Valley of Anahuac we have come here,
To win with blood an incomparable life,
Which forges the aurora of humanity.
To win with blood an incomparable life,
Which forges the aurora of humanity.

Refrán

No importa en la lucha caer;
la muerte no puede vencer.
Ya España camina al futuro.
No importa en la lucha caer.
¡La muerte no puede vencer!

Chorus

No matter should we fall in the fight;
Death cannot vanquish us.
Spain is marching towards the future.
No matter should we fall in the fight.
Death will not vanquish us!

Con paso de carga y al hombro el fusil,
vayamos, marchemos hacia el porvenir.
Bandera de fuego y el pecho de luz;
se acerca ya el triunfo de la juventud.
Bandera de fuego y el pecho de luz;
se acerca ya el triunfo de la juventud.

At the double and with a rifle over the shoulder
Let us march towards the future.
Flag of fire and light in our hearts;
The triumph of the youth approaches.
Flag of fire and light in our hearts;
The triumph of the youth approaches.

(Refrán)

(Chorus)

Revueltas uses tonal colour to create an expressive contrast between the stanzas. With a modal nature, the melody in unison from the first stanza is developed on A flat transposed to the mode of D in the range of an octave (see the score in the annex). On the other hand, the melody in thirds in the second stanza is developed on the tonality of B major in the range of an octave and a half. The result is a feeling of brightness when this part begins. *México en España* has a complex binary form with a significant change in colour at the end of part A (see TABLE 1).

cuaderno y hacen que el ‘Cancionero Revolucionario Internacional’ — acordes y versos encendidos de emoción popular — sea un registro histórico que vive nuestro pueblo, entre el estruendo de las armas y el dolor de sus hogares invadidos»; ANONYMOUS. ‘Bibliografía’, in: *Música*, no. 1 (January 1938), p. 57.

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR IN THE WORK OF SILVESTRE REVUELTAS

TABLE I

Energico (J =152) $\frac{2}{4}$

Nuances of the piece: *pp* – *fff* D.C.

A			B	
a ¹ (pedal) (8 bars)	a ² (10 bars)	a ^{2'} (transition) (10 bars)	b ¹ (10 bars)	b ^{1'} (7 bars)
A b (mode of D)		Unstable	B major	
First and third stanzas			Chorus	
34 bars			17 bars	

FORMAL STRUCTURE OF *MÉXICO EN ESPAÑA*

The delegation continued to organise its activities in Valencia. There, it opened the ‘100 years of Mexican revolutionary art’ exhibition, which showcased, among others, the engravings of José Guadalupe Posada, Luis Arenal and Leopoldo Méndez. On 15 August, the first of the LEAR anti-fascist demonstrations took place at the *Teatro Principal*. It was composed of two speeches — one by José Mancisidor, and the other by Julio Alvarez del Vayo³⁴ — a reading of anti-fascist poetry by Octavio Paz, and a concert by the Valencia Symphonic Orchestra, directed by Revueltas. On this occasion, he conducted two of his pieces that were written for a large orchestra: *Caminos* and *Janitzio*. The Madrid newspaper *ABC*³⁵ reported the demonstration as «an act of homage to Mexico, in which Alvarez del Vayo gave a vibrant speech»³⁶. Also, the Spanish minister expressed his admiration for the Mexican people and thanked them for the help that they had given «from the very beginning, along with the Soviet Union»³⁷.

On 26 August, with the same orchestra, but this time in chamber music formation, Revueltas lead the orchestra in his *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca* and *El renacuajo paseador* (The wandering tadpole) at the Valencia Conservatory. The first part of the concert was dedicated to the Soviet works of Rebikow, Solokow, Ladoukhine and Tchaïkowski, conducted by Francisco Gil. The strong presence of contemporary Soviet works in

³⁴. Julio Alvarez del Vayo (1891-1975), Spanish politician, member of the PSOE, was former ambassador to Mexico (1931-1933) and Minister for Foreign Affairs in two governments of Largo Caballero (4 September 1936-16 May 1937) during the Spanish Civil War.

³⁵. A newspaper founded in 1903, *ABC* was at the origin of the conservative and royalist bias. However it was seized during the Civil War by the republican government. Thus, from July 1936 to March 1939, the newspaper is divided into two editions: the republican one based in Madrid and the nationalist one based in Seville.

³⁶. «Un acto de homenaje a México en el que pronuncia un vibrante discurso Álvarez del Vayo»; in: *ABC*, Madrid, 16 August 1937, p. 11.

³⁷. «Desde el primer momento está, con la de la Unión Soviética», in: *ibidem*.

this concert was an exception during the Civil War, which can be explained by the propagandist character of the event and *cardenist* Mexico's association with the *stalinist* USSR³⁸. The Hispano-Cuban composer and conductor Pedro Sanjuan³⁹, who was present at the concert, wrote an extremely positive review in the journal *Nueva Cultura*⁴⁰ under the title of 'Breves notas sobre Silvestre Revueltas'. For him, *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca* particularly stood out:

In *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca*, there is notably a full page, unfinished: unique by its original expression. It is entitled *Duelo*. It is a veritable mourning, with its pain, acridity, lyricism, but it is not an easy lyricism; it is a lyricism of bitter exaltation, a sour lyricism, red-tinted, of strong, shattering tones which sing the monstrous mourning under the most atrocious form... the poet is dead, assassinated... and it is only thus, as *Revueltas* has done in his *Duelo*, and in no other way, that his death can truly be evoked⁴¹.

Over the two concerts, *Revueltas*'s works were met with a very positive reception: a veritable success. The composer described it thus to his wife in his diary:

Let me tell you about last Thursday's concert. The room was full. Some people enthusiastic, others simply curious. The jewel of Spanish musicians was there: Perez Casas, the director of the Madrid Philharmonic Orchestra. Baricasse, Palau and Casal Chapí, the directors of the municipal orchestra and the Valencia Symphonic Orchestra — basically the elite — were all kind to me at the end of the concert and warmly congratulated me. The young ones,

³⁸. The symphonic concerts organised by the republican institutions were principally made of up pieces by Spanish composers (Fallá, Turina, Granados, Bacarisse) and from the European repertoire (Beethoven foremost among them, followed by Mozart, Haydn, J. S. Bach, Purcell, Vivaldi, Mendelssohn, Franck, Grieg, Wagner, Ravel, Debussy and among others). The Russian composers that were heard, on the rarest of occasions, were Mussorgsky, Borodin, Rimski-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov. For more on this subject see OSSA MARTÍNEZ, Marco Antonio de la. *La música en la Guerra civil española*, Cuenca, Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha; Madrid-SEDeM, 2011 (Coediciones, 109; Estudios, C-21), pp. 232-249.

³⁹. The Spanish (Basque) composer Pedro Sanjuan (1886-1976) moved to Cuba in 1923, and a year later founded the La Havana Philharmonic Orchestra, that he directed for eight years, before returning to Spain in 1932. He received the Spanish Premio Nacional de la Música in 1934 in Madrid for his work *Liturgia negra*. During the Spanish Civil War, he worked for le Consejo Central de la Música and meet *Revueltas*. He returned to Cuba in 1937 before relocating the United States from 1939 until his death.

⁴⁰. In the same issue of *Nueva Cultura*, *Revueltas* published an article on music and the composers in Mexico, entitled 'Notas trasatlánticas'.

⁴¹. «En el *Homenaje a García Lorca* hay una página completa, acabada, única por su expresión original: es titulada *Duelo*. Verdadero duelo: dolor, acritud, lirismo de exaltación amarga, lirismo acibarado, de tinte rojo, de tonos desgarradores, fuerte, que canta lo monstruoso en su forma más atroz... ¡El poeta ha muerto asesinado..., y solo así, como lo hace *Revueltas* en su *Duelo*, y no de otra manera, puede evocarse su muerte!»; SANJUAN, Pedro. 'Breves notas sobre Silvestre *Revueltas*', in: *Nueva Cultura*, III/6-8 (August-October 1937), repr. Vaduz (Liechtenstein), Topos Verlag, 1977, p. 439.

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR IN THE WORK OF SILVESTRE REVUELTAS

headed by Casal Chapí, were all truly enchanted. Marinello, Guillén and many more writers and artists (García Maroto⁴²) were also there. Apparently it was a success. Everyone was happy, and so was I, despite the fact that I was thinking of you. In reality, of all the delegation's acts, the Teatro Principal meeting on Sunday 15th with the Sinfónica, Mancisidor and Alvarez del Vayo and this concert at the Conservatory have been the most exceptional. The exhibition of engravings and photographs has also had some success and has managed a lot of propaganda, but this success is of a different dimension. As for everything else, little does it matter. The most important thing is that our work may have been useful for the future relationship of these two peoples, Mexico and Spain. For that I ardently hope⁴³.

Some days later, Revueltas moved on with the LEAR delegation to Madrid, when he would go on to direct in two concerts. Paz spoke at the Ateneo in a series of Ibero-American conferences. The Mexican revolutionary art exhibition was once again put on, and met with a certain success⁴⁴. The Mexican intellectuals took part in a moving homage to the International Brigades⁴⁵. The *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas* journal, *El mono azul*⁴⁶, published an issue dedicated «to the intellectuals of Mexico and Cuba who have fought with such panache to defend our cause and who are today living among us»⁴⁷.

On 17 September, the Delegation for Propaganda and Press, the Spanish Society of Friends of Mexico and the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas* organised a concert-conference. The programme was mostly made up of the works of Revueltas: *Colorines*,

⁴². The painter, editor and writer Gabriel García Maroto (1889–1969) was part of the *Generación del 27*, just like his friend Federico García Lorca. During the Spanish Civil War he was a member of the *Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas* and directed the Propaganda Service of the Ministry for Public Instruction.

⁴³. «Te platicaré de mi concierto el jueves pasado. Lleno. Algunas gentes entusiastas, otras solamente curiosas. La flor y nata de los músicos españoles ahí. Pérez Casas, director de la Filarmónica de Madrid. Bacarisse, Palau, Casal Chapí, los directores de la banda municipal y la Orquesta Sinfónica de Valencia, en fin, la 'élite', quienes se mostraron amables al final del concierto y me felicitaron calurosamente, principalmente los jóvenes con Casal Chapí a la cabeza que se mostraron verdaderamente encantados. Estuvieron también Marinello, Guillén y muchos otros escritores y artistas. García Maroto. Fue al parecer un éxito. Todos estaban contentos y yo también me mostré contento, aunque sólo estaba pensando en ti. En realidad, de los actos de la delegación, el mitin del Teatro Principal el domingo 15 con la Sinfónica, Mancisidor y Álvarez del Vayo, y este concierto en el Conservatorio, han sido lo más sobresaliente. La exposición de grabados y fotografías también ha tenido éxito y se le ha hecho mucha propaganda, pero vamos en un éxito de otra índole. Por lo demás poco importa una u otra cosa, lo importante es que tenga nuestro trabajo utilidad en las relaciones futuras de estos dos pueblos, México y España, lo que espero convencidamente»; *Silvestre Revueltas por él mismo*, op. cit. (see note 20), pp. 102–103.

⁴⁴. *ABC*, Madrid, 14 September 1937, p. 9.

⁴⁵. *Silvestre Revueltas por él mismo*, op. cit. (see note 20), p. 105.

⁴⁶. The title of the journal refers to the blue colour of the workers' uniform and that wore by the men of the militia on the battle front at the beginning of the war.

⁴⁷. «A los intelectuales de México y Cuba que con tanto brío han luchado en defensa de nuestra causa, y que en la actualidad viven entre nosotros»; in: *El Mono Azul*, Madrid, no. 32, Thursday 9 September 1937.

CONCIERTO DE MÚSICA
SOVIÉTICA Y MEXICANA

ORQUESTA VALENCIANA
DE CAMARA

DIRECTORES:

FRANCISCO GIL

Y

SILVESTRE REVUELTAS

Patrocinado por la Alianza de Intelectuales
Antifascistas y por la Delegación Mexicana
de la L. E. A. R. en España

JUEVES, DÍA 26,
a las seis y media
VALENCIA

CONSERVATORIO
DE MÚSICA

PROGRAMA:

PRIMERA PARTE

MÚSICA SOVIÉTICA

L' Arbre de Noel. Rebikow.
Serenata. Sokolow.
Crepúsculo. N. Ladoukhine.
Vals y final de la Op. 38. Tschakowsky.

DIRECCION F. GIL

SEGUNDA PARTE

MÚSICA MEXICANA, de Silvestre Revueltas

* «Homenaje a García Lorca»

a) Baile.
b) Duelo.
c) Són.
(Para diez instrumentos).

* «El Renacuajo Paseador»

Ballet pantomima para niños.
(Para catorce instrumentos).

DIRECCION SILVESTRE REVUELTAS

(*) Primera vez en España.

INVITACIÓN PERSONAL

ILL. 3: the program from the concert on 26 August 1937 in Valencia⁴⁹.

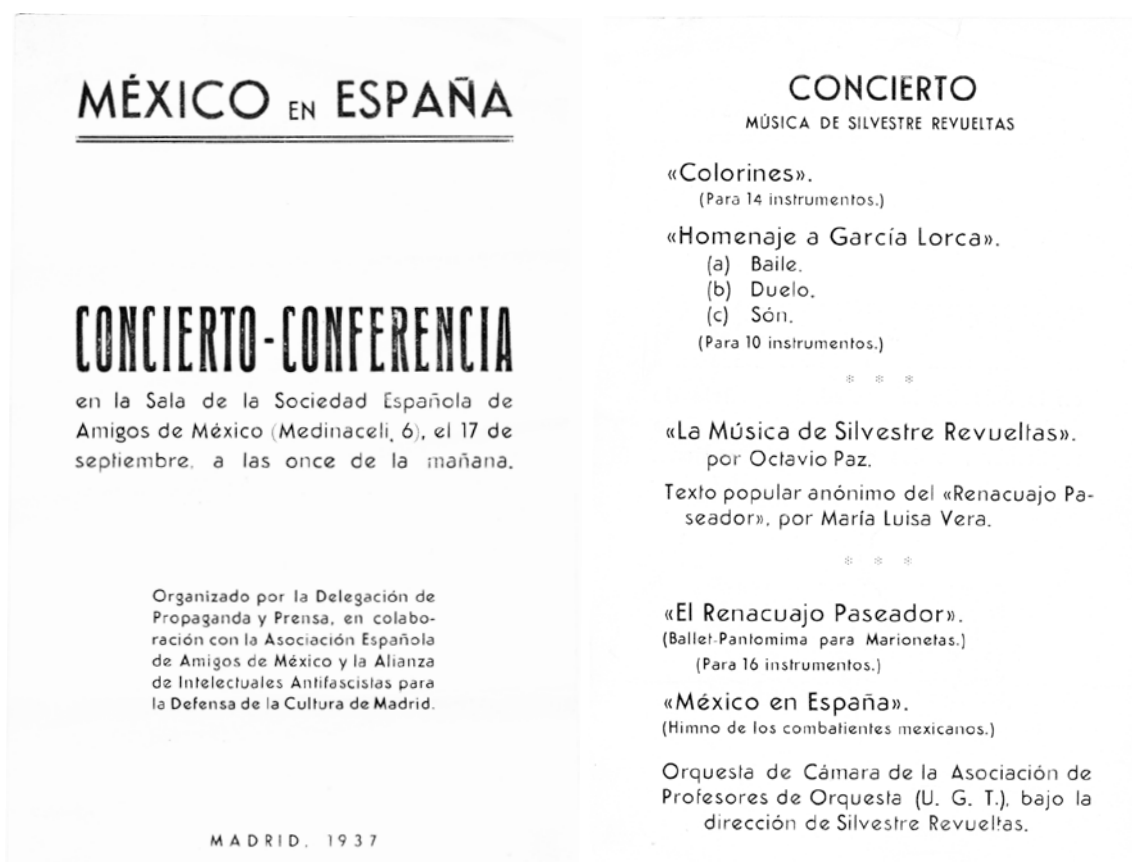
the *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca*, *El renacuajo paseador* and *México en España*. A text by Paz on the Revueltas' music and a reading of the poem of the *Renacuajo Paseador* by María Luisa Vera would complete the event. The newspaper *ABC* claimed that the *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca* was «one of the things heard recently that has made the largest impression»⁴⁹, and proclaimed the middle movement, the *Duelo*, to be «profoundly humane and filled with pathos»⁵⁰.

Another anti-fascist demonstration took place on 19 September at the Teatro de la Comedia, including Revueltas's *Caminos* and *Janitzio* and appearances from Paz, Mancisidor

⁴⁸. Source of the programmes of the concerts in Spain: *Acervo Documental Silvestre Revueltas*, op. cit. (see note 18).

⁴⁹. «Es una de las cosas oídas en los últimos tiempos que más impresión nos ha producido»; in: *ABC*, Madrid, 18 September 1937 p. 10.

⁵⁰. «Profundamente humano y pleno de patetismo», *ibidem*.



ILL. 4: the program from the concert-conference of the LEAR delegation in Madrid. Hall of the Spanish Society of Friends of Mexico, 17 September 1937.

and a Spanish poet, Rafael Alberti⁵¹. The latter had heard of Revueltas in Mexico but had never had the opportunity to enjoy his music. Alberti was very enthusiastic about him in the newspaper *La Voz* after the concert in Madrid:

Finally, what I had so long awaited had arrived: the concert, diverse in its pieces for a small orchestra conducted, by him, in a salon of the Friends of Mexico in Madrid. In Madrid! *Colorines*, *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca* and *El renacuajo*: that was the programme. Next, at the Teatro

⁵¹. The Spanish poet Rafael Alberti (1902-1999) received the *Premio Nacional de Poesía* of Spain in 1925. He was a member of the *Generación del 27*, notably with Federico García Lorca (1898-1936), Pedro Salinas (1891-1951), Jorge Guillén (1893-1984), Luis Cernuda (1902-1963) and Manuel Altolaguirre (1905-1959). He visited Mexico in 1935 and got to know certain members of the LEAR. As a member of the Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas, he took the side of the Second Republic, before being condemned to exile in France, then in Argentina and Italy. He returned to Spain in 1977.

de la Comedia meeting, two grand works. *Caminos* and *Janitzio*. Enough. Almost too much to know them. With only the *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca* and *El renacuajo*, I would have been made aware of exactly what this man is: his immense capacity, talent, and both the Mexican and universal aspects of his music. His music is very Mexican but not *local*; it is popular, but without transcriptions. What Manuel de Falla did with Andalusian and Spanish — especially in his latest period — Silvestre Revueltas achieves with the accent of his own country, and in magisterial style. All of that nocturnal atmosphere, mocking and sad, of the *carpas*, of the theatres on the outskirts of the Mexico City; all of the powerful and barbaric throbbing of the pyramids, of the mountains, of the great skies and immense flowers, the permanent agelessness, the gravity and hope of today, is in his music, with wisdom and exemplary rigour. One of Revueltas' primordial elements is his humour, the healthy and strong mockery which runs through his music. He is an ideal collaborator that some will have dreamed of for theatrical farces, cruel satire and a kick up the backside. I do not believe that any of our Spanish musicians are gifted in such a vein that is so rich, and so necessary today. While listening to Revueltas, my hands and feet jolted, I imagined myself suddenly on stage, I felt the pricks and din while pursuing my enemies, broom in hand, while at the same time anger and revolutionary laughs were waking in the homes of the people. We welcome this Mexican Silvestre — the man, the artist, this man who has left us with a deep wake of optimism, of power, of genius — to Madrid, deep in the heart of this old, new and still wild Spain⁵².

⁵². «Por fin, lo que tanto esperaba: el concierto, varias obras suyas para pequeña orquesta, dirigidas por él, en un salón de los Amigos de México, y en Madrid. ¡En Madrid! *Colorines*, *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca*, *El renacuajo paseador*, *Himno de los mexicanos combatientes en España*. Éste era el programa. Luego, en el mitin del Teatro de la Comedia, dos obras grandes: *Caminos* y *Janitzio*. Bastaba. Casi demasiado para conocerle. Con sólo el *Homenaje a Federico* y *El renacuajo* me hubiera dado cuenta de lo que es este hombre, de su inmensa capacidad y talento, de lo mexicano y universal de su música. Muy mexicana su música, nada localista; popular, pero sin transcripciones. Lo que Manuel de Falla hizo con lo andaluz, con lo español — más aún en su última época —, logra Silvestre Revueltas con el acento de su país, y de manera magistral. Toda esa atmósfera nocturna, burlesca y triste, de las 'carpas', los teatrillos arrabaleros de México; todo ese latido poderoso y bárbaro de las pirámides, de los montes, de los grandes cielos y las flores inmensas, lo antiguo y lo permanente, el hoy grave y esperanzado, está en su música, con una sabiduría y rigor ejemplares. [...] Una de las condiciones primordiales de Revueltas es su gracia, la burla sana y fuerte que corre por su música. Es ese colaborador ideal que tantas veces ha soñado uno para las farsas teatrales, para la sátira cruel y la patada en el trasero. No creo que ninguno de nuestros músicos españoles recientes esté dotado para esa vena, tan rica y necesaria hoy. Oyendo a Silvestre Revueltas, saltándose los pies y las manos, me he sentido de súbito sobre una escena, la del alfilerazo y la puya, persiguiendo a escobazos a nuestros enemigos, despertando a la vez en la gente la cólera y la risa revolucionarias. Bienvenido a Madrid, a este hondo corazón de España, viejo, nuevo y silvestre todavía, este Silvestre mexicano, hombre, artista, que en medio de nuestra tremenda lucha nos deja una profunda estela de optimismo, de potencia, de genio»; ALBERTI, Rafael. 'Amigos, un saludo, en Madrid, a Silvestre Revueltas. Músico muy mexicano y muy universal', in: *La Voz*, Madrid, 24 September 1937. Reproduced in *Silvestre Revueltas por él mismo*, *op. cit.* (see note 20), pp. 146-147.

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR IN THE WORK OF SILVESTRE REVUELTAS

On 22 September, the Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas gave a homage of goodbye to the LEAR in the form of a speech by María Teresa León⁵³ and a concert of Revueltas' and Jesús García Leoz's music. The LEAR's final large anti-fascist demonstration in Spain took place in Barcelona on 7 October at the *Palau de la Música*. As in the other demonstrations, Revueltas conducted his music, this time at the head of the Orquestra Sinfònica de les Emissores Barcelonines (the music section of the CNT), made up of the members of the violin-cellist Pablo Casals'⁵⁴ former orchestra. For Revueltas, directing Casals' orchestra was an honour and a privilege, as he felt a certain closeness to the violin-cellist's actions. At this time, Casals was touring Latin America to collect donations for republican children.

Revueltas was presented as «the great composer, the foremost revolutionary to visit us, who is leaving to go to the USSR, along with the rest of the LEAR delegation»⁵⁵. The concert programme featured *Redes*, *Janitzio* and *Caminos*. It was punctuated by speeches from Paz, Mancisidor and Vera from the LEAR, and by Antonio Machado from the Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas. The announcement of the demonstration in the local newspaper illustrates perfectly the political impact of these anti-fascist events:

Organised by the Committee for Women Against Fascism and War and sponsored by the Commission of Propaganda, an act of great solidarity and anti-fascist affirmation will take place tonight in the form of an artistic statement of great beauty. It involves the leave-taking of the Mexican delegation of the LEAR. As has been done in Madrid and Valencia, the solidarity of the Mexican nation will once more manifest itself before the cause of the Spanish Republic. Mexico, the only country that (along with the Soviet Union) has given help and support to the anti-fascist cause, will now lend us support in an exquisite artistic festival, interpreted by her most distinguished artists. Silvestre Revueltas, the great conductor and composer whose well-deserved fame has transcended the borders of his country, [and who] has crossed the seas and received the blessings of the most demanding audiences, will conduct his *Redes*, *Janitzio*, and *Caminos*, interpreted by Barcelona's great symphony orchestra, which has rendered its services to collaborate in this festival⁵⁶.

⁵³. The Spanish writer María Teresa León (1903-1988), wife of Rafael Alberti, was the Secretary of the Alianza de Intelectuales Antifascistas.

⁵⁴. The Catalan violin-cellist and conductor Pablo Casals (1876-1973) took the side of the Spanish Republic from the beginning of the war. His orchestra's activities (founded in 1919) during the war were mainly dedicated to help the republican victims. He exiled himself to France definitively in 1939.

⁵⁵. «El gran compositor mexicà, primer músic revolucionari que ens visita, el qual se'n va, amb la resta de la delegació de la LEAR, cap a la URSS»; Programme from the concert at the Palau de la Música in Barcelona, 7 October 1937.

⁵⁶. «Organizado por el Comité de Mujeres contra el Fascismo y la Guerra y patrocinado por el Comisariado de Propaganda, se celebrará esta noche un gran acto de solidaridad y afirmación antifascista, consistente en una hermosa fiesta de arte. Se trata de la despedida de la delegación mexicana de la LEAR, como ha hecho en Madrid [y] Valencia, pondrá de manifiesto una vez más la solidaridad de la nación mexicana, hacia la causa de la República española. México, el único país que junto con la Unión Soviética

COMITÈ DE DONES CONTRA EL FEIXISME I LA GUERRA

MÍTING - CONCERT
A BENEFICI DE LES VÍCTIMES
DEL DARRER BOMBARDEIG

Palau
de
la
Música

Dijous, 7 d'octubre
a les set de la tarda

JANITZIO

Una illa del llac de PATZCUARO, a l'Estat de Michoacán (Mèxic).
Música ingènua dels pobles. Alegria o vegades malenconiosa, a
vegades burlesca.

CAMINOS

Alegria de les noves rutes. Camins de victòria i d'optimisme.

COMITÈ DE DONES CONTRA
EL FEIXISME I LA GUERRA
BARCELONA I. E. A. R. MÈXIC

Patronat pel Comis-
sariat de Propaganda

E. G. de Publicacions, E. C. Sams, 24229, Barcelona

PROGRAMA

Amb la cooperació de la delegació mexicana de la
Lliga d'Escriptors i Artistes Revolucionaris
(LEAR)
en acomiadar-se de la seva expedició a Espanya.

I. — REDES Revueltas

- a) Introducció.
- b) Funeral.
- c) Fiesta del Trabajo.

Orquestra Simfònica de les Emissores Barcelonines.

Direcció: SILVESTRE REVUELTAS.

II

- 1. — POEMES. Octavio Paz.
- 2. — PARAULES. Josep Mançisidor
- 3. — POESIES. Maria Luisa Vera.

III

- 1. — JANITZIO. Revueltas.
- 2. — CAMINOS. Revueltas.

Orquestra Simfònica de les Emissores Barcelonines.

Direcció: SILVESTRE REVUELTAS.

SILVESTRE REVUELTAS

El gran compositor mexicà, primer músic revolucionari que ens visita, el qual se'n
va, amb la resta de la delegació de la LEAR, cap a la URSS.

Notes

REDES

Música d'un film. Història de treballadors, de pescadors.
Història de sempre: lluita, rebeldia, misèria, triomf.

En la música, la introducció planteja els motius del relat. El fune-
ral, el dol per la mort d'un nen. Després, l'alegria del treball triomfant.

ILL. 5: the program from the concert on 7 October 1937 in Barcelona.

THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR IN THE WORK OF SILVESTRE REVUELTAS

The LEAR delegation left Spain on 9 October to go back to Paris. «I cannot get used to the idea that perhaps I have left Spain forever. It is not possible»⁵⁷, wrote Revueltas in his diary on the eve of his departure. In the French capital, Revueltas and some other members of the delegation waited several weeks in vain for financial aid to arrive from Mexico in order to leave for the USSR, so they were forced to return to Mexico in December 1937⁵⁸. This disappointment came at the height of Revueltas' idealisation of the Soviet Union: he had wanted to go there to compose his masterpiece. The journey in Spain left a deep impression on Revueltas and the other intellectuals who accompanied him, like his friend Nicolás Guillén, for whom «the artists of today, [...] learned in Spain, with Spain, the sense of the struggle of our time»⁵⁹. From that point on, Spain would be omnipresent in his creations, whether in the figure of Federico García Lorca or in that of writers with whom he spent some time in Madrid, Barcelona or Valencia, such as Nicolás Guillén or the American poet Langston Hughes⁶⁰.

UN CANTO DE GUERRA PARA LOS FRENTE LEALES

In Mexico City, on Wednesday 5 January, José Mancisidor and Octavio Paz prepared a report to the LEAR assembly of the delegation's actions in Spain. When reporting the event, the newspaper close to the post-revolutionary regime, *El Nacional*, stated that «the report of the two comrades demonstrates the intimate harmony which exists between the Mexican revolutionary movement and the drama of universal importance which is playing

ha sabio prestar su ayuda y su apoyo a la causa antifascista, nos dará su adhesión esta vez en una deliciosa fiesta de arte, interpretada por sus más distinguidos artistas. Silvestre Revueltas, el gran director y compositor, cuya justa fama ha traspuesto las fronteras de su tierra, ha saltado los mares y ha recibido la consagración de los públicos más exigentes, dirigirá sus composiciones *Redes*, *Janitzio* y *Caminos* la que interpretará la gran orquesta sinfónica de Barcelona que se ha prestado a colaborar en esta fiesta»; *El Diluvio*, 7 October 1937, p. 8. Cited in HESS, Carol. *Op. cit.* (see note 26), p. 287.

⁵⁷. «No puedo hacerme a la idea de que tal vez deje España para siempre. No puede ser posible»; *Silvestre Revueltas por él mismo*, *op. cit.* (see note 20), p. 115.

⁵⁸. Silvestre Revueltas returned to Mexico by sea at the end of December thanks to Octavio Paz and Elena Garro, who exchanged their two first class tickets for three third class tickets. The poet Carlos Pellicer accompanied them on the journey and gave Silvestre Revueltas his latest collection of poems, entitled *Hora de Junio*, which the composer worked on upon his return to Mexico for his piece *Tres sonetos (Hora de Junio)*.

⁵⁹. «Los artistas de hoy, [...] aprendimos en España, con España, el sentido de la lucha de nuestra época»; GUILLÉN, Nicolás. 'La hermosa lección del pueblo español', in: ID. *En la Guerra de España: crónicas y enunciados*, edited by Antonio Merino, Madrid, Ediciones de la Torre, 1988 (Nuestro mundo, 15), p. 76.

⁶⁰. The American poet Langston Hughes (1902-1967) is, like Guillén, a writer who fought against racial segregation and for equal rights. He was implicated in the cultural movement in 1920s Harlem and travelled to Mexico in late 1935. He met Silvestre Revueltas in Madrid during the Spanish Civil War.

out in the Motherland»⁶¹. José Mancisidor, as president of the LEAR delegation, wrote in the journal *Nueva Cultura*:

The merit goes to General Cardenas for putting the Mexican Revolution back into place. It is under his administration that the unification of the workers' unions has been achieved; the presence of the Popular Front, the legislation of the Communist Party and the free circulation of its organ of diffusion, 'El Machete'; the acceleration of the distribution of land, the resolution that was favourable to the national proletariat during strikes of great importance on the subject of imperialist interests which were entering into play; the reform of the third article of the Constitution establishing the 'socialist' school; the impetus of popular culture, the protection of revolutionary intellectual organisations, like the Liga de Escritores y Artistas de México [*sic*], as well as other immediate claims of responsibility for the workers and countryfolk, for whom class consciousness awoke in the course of the struggles and experiences of our Revolution⁶².

In the rhetoric of the regime and that of Mexican anti-fascist intellectuals, the Spanish Civil War united the two nations through the bond of the revolutionary cause. In Mexico, the institutionalisation of the Revolution was accomplished and instrumented by two future presidents — Manuel Ávila Camacho (1940-1946) and Miguel Alemán (1946-1952) — in order to reinforce and perpetuate the authoritarian traits of the Mexican regime. Cardenas's government's identification with republican Spain was consolidated at a moment when a new political crisis was striking at home and abroad, when some took issue with Mexico's nationalist economic policy, including the factions on the extreme right. Some important changes took place in early 1938 at the heart of the Mexican regime and in its economic policy, causing a new restructuring of the political and artistic fields. From February, Silvestre Revueltas became directly concerned by the departure of the director of the National Conservatory, Estanislao Mejía, which led to the disappearance of the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional (OSN).

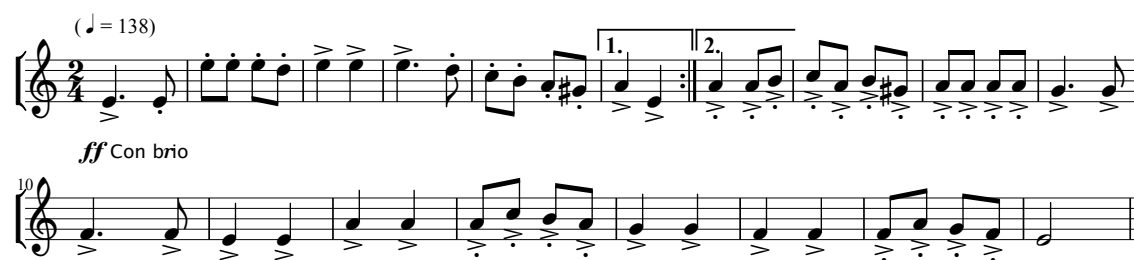
⁶¹. «El informe de ambos camaradas puso de manifiesto la íntima armonía existente entre el movimiento revolucionario mexicano y el drama de trascendencia universal que tiene por teatro a la Madre Patria»; *El Nacional*, Mexico, 14 January 1938.

⁶². «Corresponde al General Cárdenas el mérito de haber conseguido que la Revolución mexicana reiniciara su marcha. Es bajo su administración que se consigue la unificación de las centrales obreras; la presencia del Frente Popular, la legalidad del Partido Comunista y la libre circulación de su órgano de publicidad: 'El Machete'; el aceleramiento en el reparto de las tierras; la resolución favorable al proletariado nacional en huelgas de gran significación por los intereses imperialistas que entraban en juego; la reforma del artículo 3º Constitucional, implantando la enseñanza 'socialista'; el impulso de la cultura popular; la protección a las organizaciones de intelectuales revolucionarios, como la Liga de Escritores y Artistas de México [*sic*], así como otras reivindicaciones inmediatas para obreros y campesinos, cuya conciencia de clases ha despertado en el proceso de nuestra Revolución, en sus luchas y en sus experiencias»; MANCISIDOR, José. 'México en España', in: *Nueva Cultura*, *op. cit.* (see note 41), p. 411.

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Thus, Revueltas lost his position as a conductor and was obliged to look for new work opportunities, some of which presented an exclusively pecuniary interest. Nevertheless, after his return to Mexico, Revueltas worked intensely on the composition of many pieces, among them a third militant piece directly linked to war-gripped Spain⁶³: *Un canto de guerra para los frentes leales* (for brass, piano and percussion ensemble). Dated 9 February 1938⁶⁴, the melody in this work comes from the famous Spanish Civil War song, *Si me quieres escribir* (If you want to write to me). The origin of this song is contested. It most likely comes from the Spanish wars in North Africa during the 1920s or from ancient traditional *coplas* from the Spanish region of Castile and León⁶⁵. Whatever the case, as Julio Estrada states⁶⁶, there is a possible Arabic-andalusian influence on the melody (see the example below).

Ex. 1: the melody from *Un canto de guerra para los frentes leales* (*Si me quieres escribir*).



Since the song was extremely popular in both the republican and nationalist zones, there are several adaptations of the lyrics, changing according to different situations, fronts and battles from the war⁶⁷. In the republican version that was the most widespread after the Civil War, the first stanza of the song refers to the Moroccan troops called on by Franco to fight the republican troops — these troops were particularly detested by the republican camp. The other stanzas refer to the remarkable work of the republican engineers during the *Batalla del Ebro*⁶⁸. The protagonist gives his exact details to his interlocutor so that they

⁶³. Silvestre Revueltas composed two other militant pieces with expressly anti-fascist content in 1936 in 1937 to be sung by the cortège of the LEAR at the demonstration on 1 May 1937: *Porras* (for vocals, brass sextet, piccolo, clarinet in *mi* flat and percussion) and *Frente a Frente* (for vocals, brass quartet and military tambour).

⁶⁴. REVUELTAS, Silvestre. *Catálogo de sus obras*, edited by Roberto Kolb, México, UNAM-ENM, 1998, p. 89.

⁶⁵. OSSA MARTÍNEZ, Marco Antonio de la. *Op. cit.* (see note 38), p. 329.

⁶⁶. ESTRADA, Julio. 'La obra política de Silvestre Revueltas', in: *Silvestre Revueltas, sonidos en rebelión*, edited by Roberto Kolb and José Wolfèr, México, UNAM, 2007, p. 266.

⁶⁷. OSSA MARTÍNEZ, Marco Antonio de la. *Op. cit.* (see note 38), p. 328.

⁶⁸. The *Batalla del Ebro* is one of the most important battles of the Spanish Civil War. The battle lasted from July to November 1938 and ended in defeat for the republican troops. As such, it is chronologically impossible that Revueltas could have known this version of the songs at the time of the composition of his

might write to him (*Tercera Brigada Mixta*, first line of fire) and recounts the success of the republican Corps of Engineers during the battle.

Si me quieres escribir

Los moros que trajo Franco
en Madrid quieren entrar
mientras queden milicianos
los moros no pasarán.

Si me quieres escribir
ya sabes mi paradero
Tercera Brigada Mixta
primera línea de fuego.

Aunque me tiren el puente
y también la pasarela
me verás pasar el Ebro
en un barquito de vela.

Diez mil veces que los tiren
diez mil veces los haremos
tenemos cabeza dura
los del Cuerpo de Ingenieros.

En el Ebro se han hundido
las banderas italianas
y en los puentes solo quedan
las que son republicanas.

The moors [Moroccans] that Franco brought over
want to enter Madrid
so long as there are militiamen
the moors *no pasarán**.

If you want to write to me
you already know where
third Mixed Brigade
first line of fire.

Although they fire at the bridge
and at the foot-bridge
you will see me cross the Ebro
on a little sailing boat.

Ten thousand times they fire
ten thousand times we will have them
we are hard-headed
we the Corps of Engineers.

In the Ebro they have been swallowed up
the Italian flags
and on the bridges all that remains
those who are republicans.

* 'The moors won't pass'

The piece has a ternary form: the introduction, the war song and the final canon developed in *stretto* before becoming a homorhythmic *ostinato* and finishing with chords in syncopation. Revueltas used the same thematic material as the introduction to *Un canto de guerra para los frentes leales* in his piece for a large orchestra, *Itinerarios*⁶⁹, that he finished some weeks later during a train journey to the town of Morelia where he, his wife and his daughter visited the Spanish orphans that had found refuge in Mexico. Revueltas made *Un canto de guerra para los frentes leales* into a song without lyrics. According to Julio Estrada, this piece «fused the *gesture* with the ideological message, with it opening the new, sorrowful notion of music of combat. The *Canto [de guerra para los frentes*

piece. However, since the process of creating a global heritage is selective, the large diversity of versions of lyrics for this song has disappeared, leaving only a few examples, most of which refer to this famous battle.

⁶⁹. REVUELTAS, Silvestre. *Itinerarios*, New York, Southern Music Publishing, 1971.

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leales] closes a cycle of uninterrupted struggles: a tragic feeling of destiny links it to the *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca*, and establishes a profound alliance between Lorca and Revueltas in life and in death»⁷⁰.

CONCLUSION

In the sociopolitical context of post-revolutionary Mexico and the Spanish Civil War, Silvestre Revueltas' involvement in the anti-fascist and Marxist struggle at the heart of the LEAR modifies his concept of the role of the composer, of his music itself, and of his functions in social transformation. In the composer's view, class identity takes the place of the notion of race in the post-revolutionary nationalist problematic. For him, the composer must join with the proletarian class in order that he might fight to put an end to the capitalist exploitation of workers and bring on the new social order. As such, Revueltas produced works based on expressly militant textual support, destined to be sung during public demonstrations (*Frente a Frente, Porras*), based on music stemming from combat (*México en España, Un canto de guerra para los frentes leales*) or some were based on poetic and polysemous support, symbolically engaged in the anti-fascist struggle (*Senemayá, Caminando* and *No sé por qué piensas tú* on the poems of Nicolás Guillén; or his *Cinco canciones para niños* on the texts of Federico García Lorca). If Revueltas refused to use the musical genres inherited from 19th century Europe (concert, symphony, sonata, etc.), it was in order to develop some organic forms which would be anchored in a symbolic reality and, in certain cases, autobiography. Dismissing the aesthetic autonomy of art, he affirmed the social identity of music and participated in the construction of a new social order. As far as he was concerned, the artist had to put his creative force to the service of the proletarian liberation, while proposing a project of sustained national construction through concrete social advances.

The work of Revueltas was received in Spain as profoundly revolutionary and anti-fascist. However, as Carol Hess states, «critics paid little heed to Revueltas's music, addressing instead its perceived political significance, which they gleaned from entirely non-musical factors»⁷¹. The unfolding of acts or political meetings dramatised the reception of Revueltas's work, explicitly associating it with the LEAR ideology and the diplomatic position of Mexico. Effectively, Mexico's international support for the Republic became the fundamental criteria for judging the artists of the LEAR, more

⁷⁰. «Fusiona el *gesto* con el mensaje ideológico, abriendo con ello una noción nueva, dolorosa, de la música de combate. El *Canto* cierra un ciclo de lucha ininterrumpida: un sentimiento trágico del destino lo hermana con el *Homenaje a Federico García Lorca* y remite a una alianza profunda entre Lorca y Revueltas, en la vida y en la muerte»; ESTRADA, Julio. *Op. cit.* (see note 66), p. 270.

⁷¹. HESS, Carol. *Op. cit.* (see note 26), p. 289.

important even than their speeches or their aesthetic offerings. The Mexican National Anthem was thus reinterpreted as a revolutionary song and included in a piano and vocal version by Otto Mayer-Serra for the *Cancionero Revolucionario Internacional*, in the same capacity as Revueltas' *México en España*. Similarly, Revueltas' nationalist work (*Janitzio*, *Caminos*, *El renacuajo paseador*) is symbolically put back into the context of the Civil War and perceived as anti-fascist due to their rural Mexican characteristics. The battle lead by the Republicans was associated with the Mexican Revolution, the cries of the Mexicans echo with those of the Spanish, and the nationalist character of their music became a mutually-shared symbol.

The symbolic charge of the works evolved according to the different contexts of their utterance and different perspectives. The political nature of the music was built around a referential system inside a culture in a precise historical moment. In fact, it depends not only on the internal structures or on the language used, which can already be subversive, but also on the composer's production and on his views, on the critics and on the holders of political or economic power. As shown in the symbolic use of *Un canto de guerra para los frentes leales*, the polysemous character of the music allows it to be easily reinterpreted by different groups, even antagonists, and in ways that the composer could never have envisaged.

Silvestre Revueltas dedicated the last years of his life to the social and anti-fascist struggle through symbolic creation and died shortly after the fall of the Second Republic and the failure of the Mexican Popular Front. His music and his life were committed to changing the world, with «that relentless nostalgia endured by fallen angels»⁷². His music was politicised in a large resistance movement by artists who saw communism as the social model that was capable of creating a more just and more humane society. The anti-fascist purpose of his work is the symbolic combat that took place around the Spanish Civil War and was his response to the need to take up a position, neutrality being impossible for him in the international battle against fascism on the eve of the Second World War.

⁷². «Esa nostalgia sin descanso que padecen los ángeles caídos»; REVUELTAS, José. *Op. cit.* (see note 28), p. 299.

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EX. 2: México en España.

MEXICO EN ESPAÑA

Letra y Música: PLÁ Y BELTRÁN - SILVESTRE REVUELTAS

Enérgico $\text{♩} = 130$

ff

De - ja - mos las tie - rras de ver - de ma - íz; del
Con pa - so de car - ga val hombro el fu - sil, va -

marcato con energía

Va - lle de A - na - huac vi - ni - mos a - quí, a ga -
ya - mos, mar - che - mos ha - cia el por - ve - nir. Ban -

LUIS VELASCO PUFLEAU

nar con la san-greu-na vi-da sin par, que for-je la au-ro-ra de
de-ra de fue-go y el pe-cho de luz; se a- cer- ca y a el

ro-ra de la Hu-ma-ni-dad. A ga-nar con la
triun-fo de la ju-ven-tud. Ban-de-ra de

san-greu-na vi-da sin par, que for-je la au-ro-ra de
fue-go y el pe-cho de luz; se a- cer- ca y a el triun-fo de

sempre marcato

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la Humani - dad. No im -
la ju - ven - tud.

por - ta en la lu - cha ca - er; la muer - te no pue - de ven -
cer. Ya Es - pa - ña ca - mi - na al fu - tu - ro. No im - por - ta en la

lu - cha ca - er. ¡La muer - te no pue - de ven - cer!

HIMNO A LOS COMBATIENTES MEXICANOS EN ESPAÑA
AL CORONEL JUAN B. GÓMEZ