

ERNEST SHAND'S *PREMIER CONCERTO POUR GUITARE*, Op. 48: Reconstruction of a Major Chamber Work of the Late Nineteenth Century

Stanley Yates, June 1997.

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Introduction

On February 7th, 1896, Ernest Shand was to perform Giuliani's Second Guitar Concerto with string quartet at the Glasgow Arts Club. At the rehearsal for this performance, the concert's organizer, Allan Macbeth, suggested Shand add his own concerto to the program—the *Premier Concerto pour Guitare*, Op. 48. Thus was premiered not only a major chamber work by the foremost English guitarist of the nineteenth century, and the first concertante guitar work to be written by an English composer, but perhaps the most substantial guitar chamber work of the romantic period.

Likely written in 1895, Shand's Op. 48 was conceived not as an orchestral concerto, but as a chamber concerto scored for guitar with string quartet. Although unusual for the time, the work was not without precedent. For example, Fernando Sor's *Fantasia Concertante* (now lost), performed by Sor in London on several occasions between 1816 and 1817, was scored for guitar with string trio. Similarly, the three concerti Opp. 30, 36 and 70 of Mauro Giuliani exist in chamber as well as orchestral versions. However, Shand's 1896 performance, his only known performance of the Concerto, took place with piano accompaniment only—the cellist having fallen ill before the concert—and it was in a version for guitar with piano accompaniment that the work was published that same year by Schott & Co. The original string parts have not been recovered—a circumstance which led to my reconstructing the string score at the request of Editions Orphee.¹

Ernest Shand (1868-1924)²

As the preeminent guitarist of late nineteenth-century England, Shand followed such illustrious figures as Fernando Sor and Giulio Regondi. Unlike his predecessors, however, he appears to have been the first English-born guitar virtuoso, albeit active at a time when interest in guitar concerts had all but vanished—in Victorian England the banjo enjoyed greater popularity than did the guitar, and even the prodigious Regondi eventually relied upon the concertina for a living. Shand, in fact, achieved celebrity not as a guitar virtuoso, but as one of the best-known "variety" performers of the English music-halls. Nevertheless, he continued to perform and compose for the guitar, his opus numbers eventually reaching 220.³

The *Premier Concerto Pour Guitare* Op. 48

In December of 1896, ten months after Shand's only known performance of the work, Schott & Co. published a small subscription run of the *Premier Concerto* in a version for guitar with piano accompaniment. The title page reads as follows:

à LADY CLAYTON/Ier CONCERTO/POUR GUITARE/avec Accompagnement de/PIANO/
PAR /ERNEST SHAND./OP.48/Prix 10/6/Propriété pour tous pays/LONDON/SCHOTT & Co.
157 & 159, REGENT STREET, W.

The piano part is headed "PREMIER CONCERTO POUR GUITARE ET QUATOUR OU GUITARE ET PIANO," while the guitar part has the slightly more detailed appellation "PREMIER CONCERTO POUR GUITARE AVEC ACCOMPT. POUR (DEUX VIOLINS, VIOLE ET VIOLONCELLE.) OU PIANO." Among the twenty-eight subscribers listed in the publication are the work's dedicatee Lady Clayton, Allan Macbeth (organizer of the Glasgow Arts Club concerts), the guitarists A[lbert] F. Cramer and Arthur Froane, and the publishing company Messrs. Barnes & Mullins.

Despite the extremely limited dissemination afforded by such a small run, the work did not completely disappear from the repertoire—at least two performers presented the work with piano accompaniment during the 1940's. The first was the American guitarist Vahdah Olcott Bickford who gave a performance of the concerto for the American Guitar Society in Los Angeles in 1947 accompanied by her husband Zarh

Myron Bickford.⁴ The second guitarist was a young Julian Bream, who on several occasions performed the concerto with piano accompaniment: under the auspices of the Philharmonic Society of the Guitar at the Alliance Hall, London on July 17th 1947, at a Social and Athletic Club in Hampton, on March 31st, 1948, and as a student at the Royal College of Music, London.⁵ A charming unattributed account of the first of Bream's performances appeared transatlantically in *Guitar Review* in 1948:

An important guitar event of the summer took place in Westminster on July 17th, when Julian Bream gave a special recital of guitar solos under the sponsorship of the P.S.G...The "piece de resistance" of the evening, from a standpoint of novelty, was a twenty-five-minute-long concerto by Ernest Shand, late British composer for the guitar. The work, entitled "Premier Concerto pour Guitare," was originally written for guitar and strings, but the manuscripts of the other instruments have been lost, according to Wilfred Appleby, Editor of the P.S.G. Bulletin, and in 1896, was published by Schott and Co. Ltd., arranged for guitar and piano. During the playing of the Shand concerto, an amplifying apparatus was fixed to Bream's guitar. Mr. Appleby says it was described by the man who developed it as "a form of contact microphone which picks up the sound direct, so preserving the natural tone." Bream gave a brilliant performance. He was assisted at the piano by Reginald Evans. Proceeds of the concert went into a fund to be used for the furthering of Julian's career as a guitarist.

And of the 1948 Hampton performance, by Wilfred Appleby in the BMG journal:

I wonder how many times Ernest Shand's Concerto for guitar has been performed since its composer first played it at the Glasgow Arts Club in February 1895? Last year it was played at Los Angeles, USA by Vahdah Olcott Bickford with Zarh M. Bickford at the piano; I played the second movement at a Cheltenham Guitar Circle meeting.

At a concert on March 31, 1948, at Hampton the full Concerto was performed by Julian Bream, with Reginald Evans at the piano. It evoked great applause and guitarists present told me that it held them spellbound. It is certainly the finest music ever written for the guitar by a British composer. Unfortunately the manuscripts of the orchestral parts have been lost. Owing to the expense of publication they were never printed—only a piano accompaniment. The stringed instruments would be much kinder to the guitar than the piano and I hope that it will be possible to re-arrange the orchestral parts from the piano accompaniment.⁶

Style and Form

Stylistically, Shand's Op. 48 is unique as a guitar offering. In it we find not only the almost inevitable influence of Giuliani (especially in passage work and cadenzas), together with a chromatic harmonic style more reminiscent of Regondi (sequences of parallel diminished and half diminished harmonies, distant and fleeting modulations, etc.), but also the hymn-like "chorales" and popular melodies of the Victorian music hall. Although *referring* to the standard formal design of the three-movement classic-romantic concerto, Shand was less interested in rigorously-held formal design than with expressive melody and dramatic character—pathos, nostalgia, sentimentality and, above all, melodrama. Shand's structures are therefore designed around thematic statements which although defined by large cadential gestures, cadenzas, and contrasting key areas do not strictly adhere to textbook formal design.

The opening movement, *Largo*, is a loosely-constructed sonata form in A-major which, after the introduction, contrasts a chordal hymn-like sub-dominant first theme in D-major with a popular-sounding two-part second theme group in A-major (with an interjection in Ab-major) (fig. 1).

Figure 1. *Largo*: a) Theme 1 (mm. 17-22); b) Theme 2b (mm. 47-50).

Figure 1 consists of two musical excerpts, (a) and (b), for guitar (Gtr) and strings (St qt).
 Excerpt (a) shows Theme 1 (mm. 17-22). The guitar part begins at m. 17 with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The strings part begins at m. 17 with a bass clef and a key signature of two sharps. The strings part is marked *f marcato* and *pp*. The guitar part features a melodic line with some grace notes and slurs.
 Excerpt (b) shows Theme 2b (mm. 47-50). The guitar part begins at m. 47 with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The strings part begins at m. 47 with a bass clef and a key signature of two sharps. The strings part is marked *pp dolce*. The guitar part is marked *dolce* and *rit.*. The guitar part features a melodic line with some grace notes and slurs.

Developmental presentations of these themes are found in E-major, Eb-major, B-minor and A-major before being combined in C-major—the opening theme in the strings and the second theme in the guitar (m. 109) (fig. 2).

Figure 2. *Largo*: combination of themes 1 and 2b (mm. 109-111).

Figure 2 shows the combination of themes 1 and 2b (mm. 109-111). The guitar part begins at m. 109 with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The strings part begins at m. 109 with a bass clef and a key signature of two sharps. The guitar part is marked *f a tempo*. The strings part is marked *a tempo*. The guitar part features a melodic line with some grace notes and slurs. A box labeled 'E' is placed above the guitar staff at the beginning of the excerpt.

Lacking a forthright thematic recapitulation, the movement closes in the home key of A-major, though not before a *dolce* reference to the pervasive second theme before the final measures.

The second movement *Serenade* is an ABA form prefaced with a chromatic chorale-style *Adagio* introduction in E-minor. The opening gives way to a sentimental string melody, *Andante grazioso*, in the parallel major key, accompanied by repeated guitar chords (fig. 3).

Figure 3. *Serenade*: string melody (mm. 35-38).

Figure 3 shows the musical score for measures 35-38 of the *Serenade*. The score is for Guitar (Gtr) and String Quartet (St qt). The tempo is marked "Andante grazioso". The guitar part features arpeggiated chords with a *p* dynamic. The string quartet part features a melodic line with a *pp dolce* dynamic.

Shand takes a motive from this melody (at m. 45) to introduce the *Meno mosso* central section of the movement, which itself is based upon the pitches of this same motive (fig. 4).

Figure 4. *Serenade*: melodic motive (mm. 53-58).

Figure 4 shows the musical score for measures 53-58 of the *Serenade*. The score is for Guitar (Gtr) and String Quartet (St qt). The tempo is marked "Meno mosso". The guitar part features a melodic line with a "solo" marking and "a tempo" dynamics. The string quartet part features a melodic line with a "rit." marking and "a tempo" dynamics.

In the *da capo*, the guitar accompanies with arpeggiated passage-work, eventually providing an active counterpoint to the melody in the strings before taking the string melody to end the movement.

At 224 measures in length (compared with the 125 measures of the first movement), the final movement, *Allegro ma non troppo*, carries the main weight of the concerto. The movement conforms quite well to a sonata-rondo form, despite an abundance of thematic material (including a *fugata* which substitutes for a central development section). Following an introduction, the first theme-group comprises two main themes in A-major, both of which refer to the opening motive of the solo line from the introduction. Although the first theme is never heard again, the second reappears in the tonic key marking two further important structural points in the movement—at the end of the exposition and at the end of the recapitulation (fig. 5).

Figure 5. *Allegro ma non troppo*: Theme 1b (mm. 24-28).

Figure 5 shows the musical score for measures 24-28 of the *Allegro ma non troppo*. The score is for Guitar (Gtr) and String Quartet (St qt). The tempo is marked "Allegro ma non troppo". The guitar part features a melodic line with a *p* dynamic and "a tempo" marking. The string quartet part features a melodic line with a *p* dynamic and "a tempo" marking.

The second theme-group begins in the sub-dominant key D-major with a popular-sounding melody marked *Più lento* (fig 6).

Figure 6. *Allegro ma non troppo*: Theme 2 *Più lento* (mm. 44-47).

The accompaniment motive of this melody forms the rhythmic shape of a third theme—a chordal theme presented three times (in A-major, D-major, and E-major) with increasing interaction from the strings at each appearance (fig. 7).

Figure 7. *Allegro ma non troppo*, Theme 3: a) A-major (mm. 56-59); b) D-major (mm. 69-72); c) E-major (mm. 85-88).

Following a return to the movement's principal theme (see fig. 5, above), and a marked cadential gesture and cadenza that signal the end of the exposition, the expected development section is replaced by a four-voice *fugata* in the parallel-minor key, a-minor (fig. 8).

Figure 8. *Allegro ma non troppo*: fugata (mm. 116-120).

Following the initial fugal exposition, the subject appears in rhythmic augmentation and sequence against which the guitar and then the viola (in my realization) supply passage-work in sixteenth notes (fig. 9).

Figure 9. *Allegro ma non troppo*: fugata (mm. 136-139).

After a recapitulation comprising the literal restatement of the second principal theme (and in the original keys—A-major, D-major and E-major), a chordal presentation of the fugue subject, and final return to the principal theme in the tonic A-major, soloist and strings unite in a concluding unison flourish and *Presto* to bring the *Concerto* to a close (fig. 10).

When accompanying, the strings generally are set *piano* or *pianissimo* in a simple homophonic style at or below the *sounding* pitch of the guitar, though dialogue textures and textures in which the guitar plays an accompaniment role to active material in the strings are also employed. The guitar writing is of a relatively moderate technical level (somewhat below the level found in the concerto writing of Giuliani for instance), combining chordal or intervallic texture with single-line passage work (slower melodic lines are often reinforced in octaves). Shand employs no rapid right-hand arpeggios or tremolos, and the moderate tempi employed ensure that all passage-work is manageable—his invention generally relies upon melodic and harmonic detail rather than sheer virtuosity. Short cadenzas, present in each movement, rely quite heavily on chromatic scales and sequences of diminished-seventh formulae and are sometimes repeated literally during the course of a movement (perhaps Shand intended to vary these in performance) (fig. 11).

Figure 10. *Allegro ma non troppo*: ending (mm. 215-224).

Figure 11. a) *Largo*: cadenza (m. 15); b) *Allegro ma non troppo*: cadenza (mm. 67-68).

Reconstruction

For the most part, the reconstruction of four-string parts from the piano version is straightforward, the assignment of thematic, motivic and accompanimental material being easily determined through tessitura. However, since some concession to the pianistic idiom was made in the original arrangement, the piano part does not always conform to a four-voice texture, nor to the tessitura of a string quartet. The very opening measure of the work, for example, presents pitches at a third below the lowest note possible on the cello—a situation resulting from the idiomatic octave-doubling in the left-hand of the piano. At other times, even though a passage could be *literally* realized in four strings parts, it has been necessary to deduce the string original from what obviously is a pianistic equivalent. For example, passages in which strings would play rapid repeated notes are often realized on the piano as a rapid alternation *between* pitches (fig. 12).

Figure 12. *Largo* mm. 78-80.

For the sake of objectivity, and since Shand's original (as represented by the piano score) suggests utility rather than virtuosity, special string techniques such as harmonics, pizzicato, or tremolando have generally been avoided in the reconstruction. Double-stops have sometimes been employed for completion of the harmony or to render a powerful sonority, but only when fully appropriate to the harmonic and textural context—not simply because of the number of notes present in the piano score.

A substantial and stylistically unique guitar chamber work, melodically and harmonically expressive, virtuosic yet playable, Ernest Shand's *Premier Concerto pour Guitare* is a neglected monument of the late nineteenth-century guitar repertoire. With the forthcoming publication by Editions Orphee of the *Concerto* in an Urtext edition of the original Schott publication for piano and guitar along with the reconstructed string score, the work will perhaps at last occupy a position in the repertoire it deserves.

¹ A copy of the original Schott publication was spotted by Matanya Ophee amongst the contents of the Bickford Collection housed in the International Guitar Research Archives at California State University at Northridge.

² Biographical entries on Shand are found in Domingo Prat, *Diccionario de Guitarristas* (Buenos Aires, 1934), p. 294; Philip J. Bone, *Guitar and Mandolin* (London: Schott, 1954), pp. 327-29; and A. P. Sharpe, *The Story of the Spanish Guitar* (London: Clifford Essex, 1963), pp. 55-6. The standard modern writings dealing with Shand are Stewart W. Button's *The Guitar in England 1800-1924*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Surrey, 1984 (published in the series Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities, ed. John Caldwell, New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1989), and "Ernest Shand: An Introduction to His Life and Music," *Guitar Review* No. 106, Summer 1996.

³ Actually, Shand's opus numbers appear to break-off at Op. 130 *Adieu*, resuming at Op. 200 with *Au coin de feu*, and therefore comprise around 150 works.

⁴ Button, 1996, p.4.

⁵ Button, 1989., pp. 165-166. Button cites "May 1948" as the date of Bream's Hampton performance at the Coys Social and Athletic Club; Wilfred Appleby cites March 3 (see note 7, below).

⁶ Wilfred M. Appleby, BMG, June 1948, p. 181.