

Michael Tippett

The Blue Guitar

Sonata for solo guitar
Sonate für Sologitarre

Edited by/Herausgegeben von
Julian Bream

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In 1934, a Cubist exhibition including some Picassos came to Hartford, Connecticut. The poet Wallace Stevens went to see it. He was struck by a Picasso painting featuring a guitar-player. Its impact was such that he was stimulated to write a poem with the title, *The Man with the Blue Guitar*. He set down the essential matter of the poem in the first stanza, which begins:

The man bent over his guitar,
A shearsman of sorts. The day was green.
They said, "You have a blue guitar,
You do not play things as they are."
The man replied, "Things as they are
Are changed upon the blue guitar."

Stevens explores the paradox of outer reality and artistic reality in a further 32 stanzas.

Reading the poem acted for me roughly as the sight of Picasso's picture did for the poet. But of course, all the words and concepts have disappeared and this piece for guitar is essentially music. It could quite properly be appreciated solely as a short sonata. All that remained from the poem were three moods, or gestures, which suggested titles for the movements:

Transforming/
Verwandeln

Being the lion in the lute
Before the lion locked in stone.

Dreaming/
Träumen

...Morning is not sun,
It is this posture of the nerves,
As if a blunted player clutched
The nuances of the blue guitar.

Juggling/
Jonglieren

... the old fantoche
Hanging his shawl upon the wind.

The Blue Guitar was written for Julian Bream and commissioned by the Ambassador International Cultural Foundation in celebration of the tenth anniversary of Ambassador Auditorium, Pasadena, California. The world première of the work was given by Julian Bream at the Ambassador Auditorium on November 9th 1983.

The work is dedicated to the memory of the conductor Calvin Simmons (1950-1982).

Michael Tippett

1934 kam eine Kubisten-Ausstellung, darunter einige Werke Picassos, nach Hartford, Connecticut. Der Dichter Wallace Stevens sah diese Ausstellung, wobei Picassos Bildnis eines Gitarrenspielers großen Eindruck auf ihn machte. Der Eindruck war so stark, daß Stevens dazu angeregt wurde, ein Gedicht mit dem Titel *The Man with the Blue Guitar* zu schreiben. Die erste Strophe, die die Hauptaussage des Gedichtes enthält, beginnt folgendermaßen:

In weiteren 32 Strophen versucht Stevens das Paradoxon, das zwischen äußerer Wirklichkeit und künstlerischer Wirklichkeit besteht, zu ergründen.

Auf mich hatte das Lesen des Gedichtes etwa die gleiche Wirkung wie das Betrachten des Picasso-Bildes auf den Dichter. Sämtliche Wörter und Begriffe sind natürlich nicht mehr vorhanden; das Gitarrenstück ist im wesentlichen Musik. Auch lediglich als Sonate gesehen, behält das Werk zu Recht seinen Reiz. Was von dem Gedicht übrig geblieben ist, sind die drei Stimmungen oder auch Gesten, die bei den Titeln für die drei Sätze Pate standen:

The Blue Guitar wurde für Julian Bream geschrieben und war von der *Ambassador International Cultural Foundation* anlässlich des zehnten Jahrestages des Ambassador Auditoriums, Pasadena, California, in Auftrag gegeben worden. Julian Bream hat das Werk am 9. November 1983 im Ambassador Auditorium uraufgeführt.

Es ist dem Gedenken an Calvin Simmons (1950-1982) gewidmet.

Michael Tippett

When Alonso Mudarra published in 1546 his *Tres libros de musica en cifras para vihuela* he included within it several pieces for the guitar which have remained to the present day the earliest printed source of music for the instrument. For some four hundred years thereafter music for the guitar was composed almost exclusively by guitarists.

Yet paradoxically, in our own time most of the major works for the instrument have been written by composers who are not themselves guitarists, who have been drawn towards the instrument either by way of a special occasion or in response to a commission.

Moreover, many of these works have been written with a specific performer in mind. These players have not only assisted editorially in preparing the music for publication, but in many cases have been near at hand to advise the composer on technical matters as the composition evolves on its way.

In the summer of 1983, it was thus my privilege to have been associated with Sir Michael Tippett and *The Blue Guitar*. The many visits to the composer's house were sometimes memorable and musically speaking often fascinating as the music underwent transformation either by simplification or elaboration. My idea was that both Sir Michael and the Guitar should breathe naturally and ring towards the ultimate artistic considerations of the piece.

Guitarists might like to consider a couple of alternatives to the original text which have been sanctioned by the composer:

Page 4, bars 8 and 12:

the second quaver can be 'bent' microtonally in the manner of a blues guitarist.

Page 10, bars 5, 6, 9 and 10:

here, where the opening theme is transposed to A major, a lovely effect can be achieved by playing the *g* and *b* on the lower open strings.

Julian Bream

Die von Alonso Mudarra 1546 herausgegebenen *Tres libros de musica en cifras para vihuela* enthielten auch verschiedene Gitarrenstücke, die bis zum heutigen Tage als eine der ersten Quellen gedruckter Musik für dieses Instrument gelten. Noch etwa vierhundert Jahre lang danach wurde Gitarrenmusik fast ausschließlich von Gitarristen geschrieben.

Paradoxiertweise wurden in unserer Zeit die meisten größeren Werke für dieses Instrument von Musikern komponiert, die selbst keine Gitarristen waren, sondern sich aufgrund einer besonderen Gelegenheit oder eines Auftrages zu diesem Instrument hingezogen fühlten.

Viele dieser Werke wurden sogar für einen ganz bestimmten Interpreten geschrieben. Diese haben nicht nur bei der editorischen Vorbereitung der Veröffentlichung des Werkes mitgeholfen, sondern waren häufig auch dann zur Stelle, wenn es galt, den Komponisten im Hinblick auf technische Fragen, die sich im Laufe der Komposition ergaben, zu beraten.

Im Sommer 1983 hatte ich das Vergnügen, Sir Michael Tippett bei der Vorbereitung von *The Blue Guitar* behilflich sein zu dürfen. Meine zahlreichen Besuche im Hause des Komponisten waren zum Teil unvergeßliche Momente und in musikalischer Hinsicht häufig faszinierend, da die Musik hier eine Veränderung erfuhr, sei es durch Simplifizierung oder durch gezielte Weiterentwicklung. Nach meiner Vorstellung sollten sowohl Sir Michael als auch die Gitarre in natürlichem Rhythmus „atmen“ und sich so den künstlerischen Zielsetzungen des Stückes nähern.

Vielleicht könnte für den Gitarristen auch die eine oder andere, vom Komponisten gebilligte, Variante zum Original-Notentext in Betracht kommen:

Seite 4, Takte 8 und 12:

die zweite Achtelnote kann mikrotonal „gebeugt“ werden, so wie der Bluesgitarrist es tut.

Seite 10, Takte 5, 6, 9 und 10:

hier wird das Eröffnungsthema nach A-Dur transponiert, und es läßt sich ein schöner Effekt erzielen, spielt man *g* und *h* auf den unteren, freischwingenden Saiten.

Julian Bream

The Blue Guitar

Sonata for solo guitar

Edited by/Herausgegeben von
Julian Bream

Michael Tippett
(1984)

I

Medium Slow - Slow

The musical score is presented in eight staves, each containing a system of two staves (treble and bass clef). The first staff begins with a *p* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff features a *f* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes, followed by a *p* dynamic. The third staff includes a *p delicate* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth staff has a *mf* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The fifth staff starts with a *mf* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The sixth staff begins with a *p delicate* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The seventh staff has a *mf* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The eighth staff concludes with a *sub. pp* dynamic and a triplet of eighth notes. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, trills, and fingering numbers (1-5) for the left hand. The tempo is marked as 'Medium Slow - Slow'.

Musical staff 1: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. A circled 4 indicates a fingering. The staff contains a melodic line with a slur and a dynamic marking of *f strong*. The piece concludes with a 2+3/4+8 time signature.

Musical staff 2: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Includes fingering numbers 4, 3, 2, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. A circled 1 indicates a fingering. The piece concludes with a 2+3/4+8 time signature.

With movement (♩ = ♩)

Musical staff 3: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Includes fingering numbers 4, 3, 2, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. A circled 3 indicates a fingering. Dynamic markings include *ff* and *mf*. A circled 1 indicates a fingering. The piece concludes with a 2+3/4+8 time signature.

Musical staff 4: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Includes fingering numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. The piece concludes with a 2+3/4+8 time signature.

Musical staff 5: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Includes fingering numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. A circled 3 indicates a fingering. The piece concludes with a 2+3/4+8 time signature.

CII

Musical staff 6: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Includes fingering numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. A circled 3 indicates a fingering. The piece concludes with a 2+3/4+8 time signature.

Musical staff 7: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Includes fingering numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. A circled 3 indicates a fingering. The piece concludes with a 2+3/4+8 time signature.

CIII

CIII

easing a little

with more movement: singing top, ringing below

CIV

CVII

CVIII

CIV

CI

ringing top, singing below

CII

CII

mark the bass

singing top, ringing below

CVI

④ ④ ④

easing a little

(2+3+3)

art.harm.

In time again (Medium Slow)

long

ten.

f ② ④

mf *sub. p*

f strong *p*

CII

ten.

CIV

ten.

CIV

f strong *p* *f strong* *p* *f strong*

ten.

CIV

CII

CX

CIV

p ④ ② *f strong* *mf* *f strong* *mf*

faster, free flowing

p *mf*

② ③ ② ③

free flowing

f strong *mf*

③ ② ③ ② ③

radiant (with stillness)

f strong *mf* *p*

③ ⑥ ②

with movement

radiant (with stillness)

f *mf*

with movement

ff very strong

dark

f strong

brilliant

CVIII

mf

dark

f strong²

brilliant

mf

dark

f strong

firm

CII

CIV

mf

dark

brilliant

f strong

mf

6

6

6

6

dark

brilliant

f strong

mf

dark

6

6

6

2 3 6 3 4

f strong

firm

CIV

4

mf

i a m i m *m i m* singing, with clarity

CVII CV

f *sub. mf*

CV

CVII CVI

sub. pp

CXII

mp *mf*

CVIII CIV CV

f *mf*

tender

CVIII CVII

f

as before CIII

sub. mf

CI

2

5

CIII — CII

1 3

4 5

CVIII *sub. pp*

5 2 3

(mp) (mf)

CIV

tender

f mf

2 3 4 5 6

CIV

as before

f subp mp

6

CIII

mf f

3 6

strong and dark

CI

p

II

Very slow *pp* **CVI rubato**

p **CIV** **CVI** **CIV** *pp*

pp **CVI rubato** **in tempo** **CIV** **CVI** *p*

CIV rhetorical recitative *f* art harm. *sf pp* echo *pp*

poco f

ten.

Detailed description of the musical score: The score is written on a single treble clef staff in 4/4 time. It consists of seven systems of music. The first system is marked 'Very slow' and 'pp', featuring a triplet of eighth notes and a slur over a group of notes. The second system is marked 'in tempo' and 'pp', with dynamic changes from 'p' to 'pp' and includes markings for 'CIV' and 'CVI'. The third system is marked 'pp' and 'p', with 'CVI rubato' and 'in tempo' markings. The fourth system includes 'CIV', 'rhetorical recitative' (marked 'f'), 'art harm.' (marked 'sf'), and 'echo' (marked 'pp'). The fifth system is marked 'poco f'. The sixth system is marked 'ten.'. The score includes various fingerings (circled numbers 1-5), slurs, and triplet markings.

f *sf* *pp echo*

poco f

p echo *f*

pp

p

p

f *sf* *pp echo*

⑤ > 1
CIV
poco f

p

ten.
f sf pp echo
3 ③

② > 3
poco f
④ ⑤ ⑥

p echo f p echo

very tranquil
pp
CIII
cresc. p mp
CVIII

mf mf f

CXII

f *f* (*mf*)

CXI

(*mp*) (*p*)

very tranquil

CVI

art.harm.

CI

pp

CVI

CI

slightly faster

CIV

dry

resonant

slightly faster

CIV

dry

resonant

as before

as before

f *f* *p* echo *p* echo

very tranquil

CII

CVII

pp *cresc.* *p* *mp*

CXI

mf *f* *piu f* (*♩ = ♩*)

(*f*) (*mf*) (*mp*) (*p*)

very tranquil

art. harm. 3

CI

pp *resonant*

slightly faster

CIII

6

6

as before

art.harm. gva

dry *resonant*

slightly faster

CIII

6

6

CIII

6

6

CVI CV CIV

Musical staff with notes and fingerings for measures CVI, CV, and CIV. The staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. It contains a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes with various fingerings indicated by numbers 1-4.

Musical staff with notes, fingerings, and dynamics. It includes a forte (*f*) dynamic marking and a *sub. p* (subito piano) marking. Fingerings are indicated by circled numbers 1-4.

* CII

Musical staff with notes and fingerings. It begins with a circled number 3. A dynamic marking of *sub. p* is present. The staff contains eighth and sixteenth notes with fingerings 1-4.

Musical staff with notes and fingerings. It includes a *sub. p* dynamic marking. Fingerings are indicated by circled numbers 1-4.

CIV CVI

Musical staff with notes and fingerings. It includes a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. Fingerings are indicated by circled numbers 1-4.

f CXII CIX CII CII

Musical staff with notes, fingerings, and dynamics. It includes a forte (*f*) dynamic marking and a *ff strong* marking. Fingerings are indicated by circled numbers 1-4.

Musical staff with notes, fingerings, and dynamics. It includes a *sub. p* dynamic marking and a forte (*f*) marking. Fingerings are indicated by circled numbers 1-5.

* ossia: CII

Musical staff for the ossia section, labeled CII. It contains a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes.

CIII CI CIII

ff strong

CI

sub. p

CII CVI

sub. p

9 10

sub. p *f* *sub. p* *f*

CI CII CIII CV CVII CIII

sub. p *cresc.* *f* *ff*

Rasg.

with energy and panache

CV

f

CV

⑤ ④

3+3+2

CI

Perc.

pp

CIII

Perc.

p *f*

CI

pp

p *f*

CII

③

CIV

CVIII

CVI

⑥ ④

3+3+2 Perc. CI

pp p

CII Perc. f

f

CI f

pp f

CI 3+3+2 Perc.

Perc.

CVII p Perc.

p Perc.

CIV CIII mf f

mf f

CVII CV 1 2 3 4

CVII CV 1 2 3 4

3+3+2

Perc. *p* ②

CV

Perc. *mf*

CII

CI

②

CIII

CVII

CVII

⑥ ④ ⑤ ④ ⑤

CI

CV

CV

④ ⑤ ④ ⑤

⑤

CI

pp