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The Forgotten String Quartets (1927–1933) by Gaspar Cassadó

The Barcelonian cellist and composer Gaspar Cassadó (1897–1966) is seldom included when significant Spanish twentieth-century composers are discussed nowadays, albeit leaving one of the last century's largest œuvres of cello compositions. Cassadó was known as one of the greatest cello virtuosi of his time and is remembered as the composer of a couple of cello pieces that are included in the standard repertoire – above all *Requiebros*, *Danse du Diable vert* and *Suite per violoncello* – but Cassadó himself seemed to have shown little interest in his own legacy, and his opus with over sixty original works and eighty transcriptions remains fragmented and largely unedited, unpublished or unperformed.

Up until now, there has been little effort to revaluate the many orchestral and chamber music compositions that still await publication and performances. The fact that Tomás Marco, in his *Spanish Music in the Twentieth Century*, places Cassadó as a minor *casticista* composer is therefore not surprising.[1] *Casticismo* is used here by Marco to describe a very specific type of Castilian folklorism:

> "The term *casticismo* here implies an injection of life into neoclassicism; it refers back to the *casticista* literary age par excellence, that of the eighteenth century viewed through a mixture of aristocracy and *majeza* – a uniquely Spanish quality combining flashy elegance and cockiness, attributed to the popular classes in Madrid and Andalusia – bullfights, *saraos* and guitar playing."[2]

This conclusion regarding Cassadó's compositions is a result of examining the most readily available works like *Requiebros* or *Sonata nello stile antico spagnuolo*, but these works are actually far from representative

1 Marco, Tomás. *Spanish Music in the Twentieth Century*, translated by Cola Franzen, Cambridge, MA, London, Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 135.

2 *Ibid*., p. 129.

of Cassadó's opus, an opus not only built on shorter solo or duo pieces for the cello, piano or the guitar, but one that offers a considerable range of scopes and genres, including a number of orchestral pieces, a Piano Trio and three String Quartets. A wider view of Cassadó's legacy would also acknowledge connections to the composer group that Marco denominates *Generación ´27* (in reference to the literary group), which was roughly contemporary with Cassadó. Several of the characteristics that Marco identifies for this group resonate with Cassadó: the strong influence from Ravel and Stravinsky, the connections with composers in *Generación '98* (such as Turina, and Falla) and the many stylistic experiments, including impressionism, postromanticism and neoclacissism.[3] Cassadó also collaborated with composers included in Marco's *Generación '27*, for example Ernesto Halftter. Cassadó was the dedicatee of Halftter's *Fantaisie Espagnole* (1952) for cello and piano and Halftter also transcribed the piano piece *Canzone et Pastorella* for Cassadó in 1934 to cello and piano. Cassadó was without doubt a minor figure in the evolution of Spanish music and predominantly maintained a romantic, nationalist sound profile, but the heterogeneous styles and genres found in his works are not confined to the narrow *casticista* label provided by Marco.

Among Cassadó's large-scale ventures in classical genres, the three String Quartets are particularly interesting for several reasons: nowhere else in his opus is there such a large and homogenous set of works within the same genre and nowhere else does Cassadó offer a similar display of his stylistic experiments and developments as a young composer. Cassadó received a broad musical education at the hands of his father, the composer and organist Joaquim Cassadó, and in fact he continued into early adulthood as dedicated to composition and transcription as he was to performing as a cellist. Cassadó was also an accomplished pianist, a dedicated teacher and he had an unusual interest in the setup of his instrument, collaborating with several instrument makers to, among other things, improve sound volume. Nevertheless, there was a turning point during his career when Cassadó decided to focus more on his performance and less on composition and other activities. Disciples, such as Marçal Cervera, assure that he made a conscious decision, believing his chances of a successful career as a performer to be greater than as

3 Marco, T. *Spanish Music…*, *op. cit.*, pp. 102–103.

a composer.[4] Cassadó himself mentions in an interview in 1959 that "Vienna decided my musical career. I dreamed of becoming a composer but it was here that I understood that my true horizon was that of the cello".[5] We do not know for sure which visit to Vienna Cassadó is speaking of, but it is likely that he refers to 1932, when he spent the summer composing in Austria.

During the twentieth century specialisation within the musical professions increased greatly and, as the century advanced, fewer and fewer composers were also active performers. In this context, one wonders what specific change in compositional approach resulted from Cassadó's decision to dedicate himself to performance, and the String Quartets potentially represents the culmination of a compositional approach that was later abandoned. A review of the Quartets could therefore also be helpful for establishing any development in style or form during this crucial period and divergences with works of later periods in Cassadó's life.

The decision to concentrate on performance is perhaps connected with the fact that only the first Quartet, in F minor, seems to have been published (Schott, 1931) while Quartet no. 2 in G major and Quartet no. 3 in C minor appear to survive only in manuscript, of which one of the copies is found in the Cassadó archive at the Museum of Education of the Tamagawa University, Tokyo. Furthermore, Cassadó did not seem to promote the Quartets himself and there is not record of a dedicatee, a premiere of the works during his life, or indeed any record of a performance, except for the concert offered by *Cuarteto Cassadó* in 1996 at Fundación Juan March in Madrid.[6]

The unavailability of the sheet music, that has only survived in manuscript copies without public access, in the case of the two last Quartets is a factor to take into account when discussing the cultural and historical context of these works, but there are several others. The

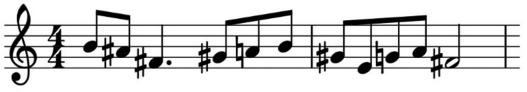
4 Cervera, Marçal. Personal communication, April 6, 2011.

5 Cassadó, Gaspar, cited in Pagès, Mònica. *La veu del violoncel*, Barcelona, Tritó, 2000, p. 67.

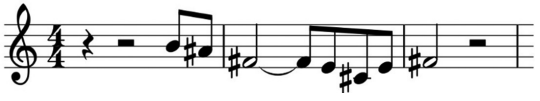
6 *Cuarteto Cassadó* (Victor Martín, Domingo Tomás, Emilio Mateu and Pedro Corostela) performed the three Quartets as part of a concert cycle dedicated to Cassadó's chamber music at Fundación Juan March in Madrid, 1996. This performance was recorded and is used for discussions on Quartets no. 2 and no. 3 later in this article.

cultural context of the Quartets is not only made up by the combination of Catalan and pan-Spanish folklore often used in Cassadó's works, but also by the fact that the Quartets were written in Italy and that Cassadó received most of his musical instruction in France. Like many contemporary Spanish musicians, Cassadó spent most of his life in exile, but in his case this was not a consequence of the Civil War but a choice made much earlier in order to favour his performance career. Cassadó went as a child to Paris to study with Pau Casals, spending at least five years in the French capital, and later moved to Florence where he had friends and Maecenas to help him establish himself as a solo cellist during the early 1920s. The String Quartets were written in Rome right in the middle of Cassadó's most prolific period and offer unique insight into Cassadó's compositional evolution and creational tendencies during six crucial years, 1927–1933. Cassadó experienced a highly productive period both as a performer and a composer, which, as previously mentioned, lasted until the early 1930s. During this time he created a large bulk of compositions and saw many of his works published. He wrote three Sonatas 1924–1931 for his instrument, a Solo Suite in 1926 and a number of shorter works, including the immensely popular *Requiebros,* published in 1932. His prominence also rose significantly with the premiere of his symphonic piece *Rapsodia Catalana* by the New York Philharmonic in 1928 and he produced three *concertante* works during this period; *Variations concertantes* for piano and orchestra, *Nocturnes Portuguais* for cello and orchestra and a Cello Concerto, as well as a Piano Trio and a Violin Sonata that were both published during the late twenties.

The Quartets form a homogenous set of works, both in length, structure and style, and, among compositions written by Cassadó around the same time, they are most reminiscent of the postromantic and lyrical Violin Sonata and the unpublished Cello Sonata in B minor from 1931. The Cello Sonata interestingly references one of the motives of the first movement from the second Quartet, a folkloric motive resembling a lament, highlighting a descending semitone followed by a descending major third (*cf.* Exs. 1a-b).



Example 1a: Cassadó, Cello Sonata in B minor (transcription of the main motive).



Example 1b: Cassadó, String Quartet no. 2, I (transcription of one of the main motives).

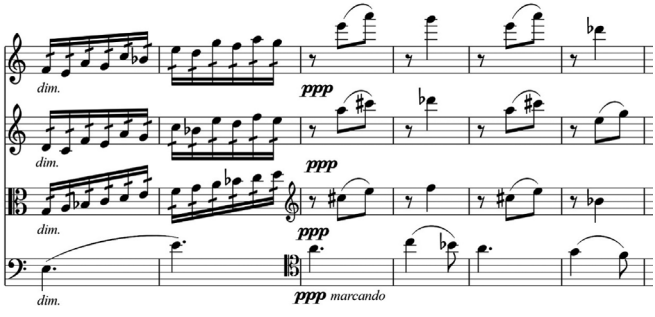
The Cello Sonata in question is perhaps the work by Cassadó that approximates most the musical idiom of the String Quartet, although the structure and compositional style are far less advanced in the Sonata, and the balanced chamber music writing between the four voices sets the Quartets apart from Cassadó's other compositions. The Quartets also act as a medium for experimentations with sonorities and techniques for the young Cassadó to a higher degree than other works, as the following discussions will show.

The closest predecessor was the String Quartet written by his father and musical mentor Joaquim Cassadó in 1917, named *Cuarteto Español: El Alcazár de las perlas*, a piece dedicated to Gaspar and premiered in 1918 by a quartet consisting of Gaspar, Joan Massià, Alfred Quer, and Josep Garangou.[7] The folkloristic musical idiom of Joaquim's Quartet is not particularly close to that of his son's works, although they seem to share some influences, mainly from French composers as further examinations will corroborate. Nevertheless, Joaquim Cassadó's full-length work must have been a motivational example for his son, given the limited number of Spanish string quartets performed during this period.

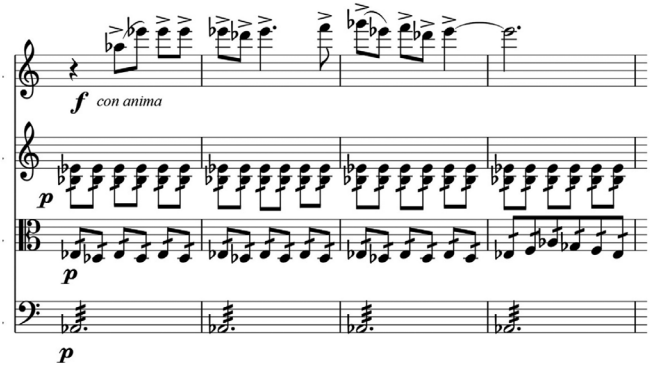
Among Spanish string quartets, there appear to be some stylistic parallels between Cassadó's works and contemporary works for quartet, such as the *Serenata* by Joaquín Turina (1935) and the two Quartets by Jesús Guridi (1933 and 1949). Turina and Cassadó were friends from their time in Paris and Turina dedicated the transcription of *Jueves*

7 Cassadó, Joaquim. *Cuarteto Español: El Alcazár de las perlas*, copia manuscrita, Fons Joaquím Cassadó i Valls, M 6398/1, Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya. First edition Barcelona, Boileau, 2013 (reviewed by Melani Mestre i Rebull).

Santo a medianoche from his piano suite *Sevilla* for cello and piano to Cassadó in 1924. Postromantic characteristics in Turina's work, such as chromatism and abundant unresolved soft dissonances like major sevenths and ninths, are shared with the Cassadó Quartets but more importantly, Turina and Cassadó share a common influence from French impressionism. This influence was expressed in different ways in their works but coincided in numerous technical details, including long flowing tremolo sections, sigh-shaped accompaniment figures and the frequent *pizzicato* in the cello (*cf*. Exs. 2 and 3).



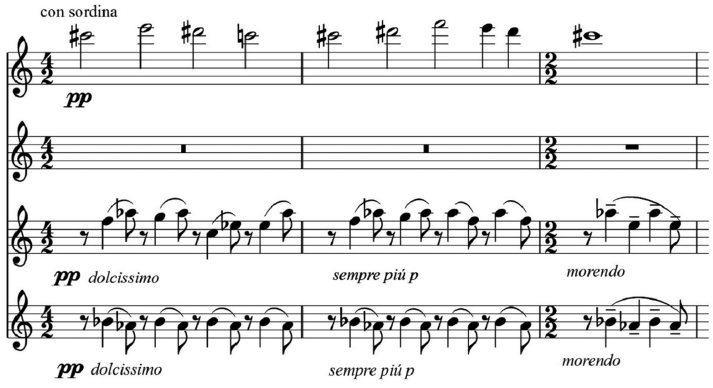
Example 2: Turina, *Serenata*, mm. 121–126. © UME, Madrid, 1935.[8]



Example 3a: Cassadó, Quartet no. 1 in F minor, I, mm. 42–45. © Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, 1931.[9]

8 The Example 2 is published with kind authorization of Fundación Juan March, Madrid (<www.march.es>).

9 The Examples 3, 4, 5a, 6a and 7 are published with kind authorization of Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, D-55116 Mainz, Weihergarten 5 (<www.schott-music.com>).



Example 3b: Cassadó, Quartet no. 1 in F minor, III, mm. 47–49. © Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, 1931.

But while Turina's French influence was more generalist, Cassadó's impressionist model was very specific: Ravel's String Quartet, written in 1903, a few years before Cassadó's arrival to Paris. Several of Cassadó's disciples, among others Marçal Cervera, claim Cassadó studied composition with Ravel, and although there are no contemporary evidence to confirm this, Cassadó certainly moved in the same circles as the French composer, befriending many of the same Spanish musicians.[10] He also played in concerts with Ravel's friend Ricardo Viñes. As previously mentioned, Ravel exerted a substantial influence on Spanish composers of what Marco denominates *Generación '27*, as well as on composers of older generations such as Joaquim Cassadó, Jesús Guridi or Joaquín Turina and there are references to specific works by Ravel in other compositions by Cassadó.[11] It is in the string quartets, however, where one work stands model in the most obvious manner. A number of structural details coincide with Ravel's Quartet as well as techniques used and stylistic traits, although the encompassing musical idioms diverge significantly. When composing his String Quartet Ravel had turned to Debussy's Quartet from 1893 for inspiration and there are

10 Cervera, Marçal. Personal communication, April 6, 2011.

11 Kaufman, Gabrielle. *Gaspar Cassadó: A Study of Catalan Cello Arrangements and Cello Performance Style*, PhD dissertation, Birmingham (UK), Birmingham City University, 2013, p. 21.

therefore certain similarities between both French works and Cassadó's works, for example in the movement structure. In two of his Quartets Cassadó mimics the use by Ravel and Debussy of two outer movements that follow sonata form to some degree, a light *scherzando* as second movement and a slow third movement. The creative tempo indications by Cassadó are shown below in Table 1, manifesting an additional reference to French impressionism in the use of the dance *Pavana* in the third movement of Quartet no. 2.[12]

Table 1: Gaspar Cassadó's tempo indications for the three String Quartets.

No. 1 in F minor, 1927	No. 2 in G major, 1929	No. 3 in C minor, 1933
Allegro molto ed espressivo	*Allegro giocoso*	*Allegro pesante ed appassionato*
Allegretto tranquillo		*Vivace e con spirito. Allegro malinconico*
Tempo di elegia	*Cansóne e Pavana (Andantino Cantabile)*	*Andante cantabile*
Allegro piuttosto moderato ma energico	*Recitativo e finale (Grave–Allegro assai e con brio)*	*Allegro con fuoco ed appassionato*

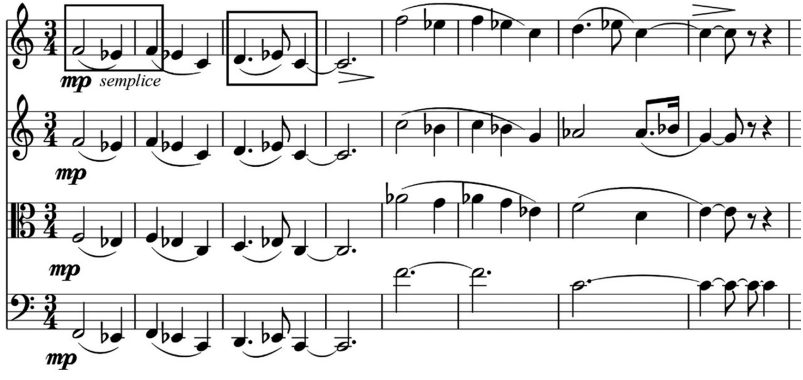
The most substantial parallel with the French quartets is perhaps the cyclic development of the motives. The first movement of Quartet no. 1 in F minor by Cassadó centres around a main theme, presented in unison by all four instruments in the first measures of the piece, which is inverted and moulded into different shapes throughout the Quartet (Ex. 4). Marianne Wheeldon explains, regarding the Quartets of Ravel and Debussy, that "the vital component of any cyclic work is its cyclic theme, which has to be malleable enough to adapt to different musical contexts, but also distinctive enough to be recognized over the course of four movements".[13] In Debussy's String Quartet "the opening germ idea of the work, with its descending second and third, is modally

12 Fundación Juan March. *Conciertos del sábado. Abril 1996. Ciclo Gaspar Cassadó: Música de Cámara*, concert program, Madrid, Fundación Juan March, April 1996 (available online at <http://recursos.march.es/culturales/documentos/conciertos/cc120.pdf?v=22893915>).

13 Wheeldon, Marianne. "The String Quartets by Debussy and Ravel", in Jones, Evan Allan (ed.). *Intimate Voices*, Rochester, University of Rochester Press, 2009, pp. 3–4.

harmonised. It is reshaped for cyclic occurrence in both the second and fourth movements", as described by Stowell.[14]

In Cassadó's work, several cells from the first meta-theme with distinct qualities, chiefly the descending tone step followed by an ascending tone step and the dotted crotchet followed by an ascending quaver, are reused in subsequent motives of both the first and second movement (motives using these intervals are seen in Exs. 3, 4, 5 and 6) and the same motivic cells are also used to build many of the accompanying figures.

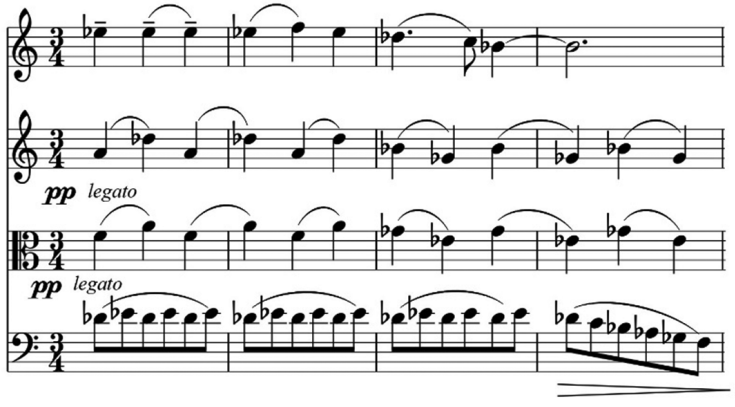


Example 4: Cassadó, Quartet no. 1 in F minor, I, mm. 1–8 (with primary motivic cells marked with boxes). © Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, 1931.

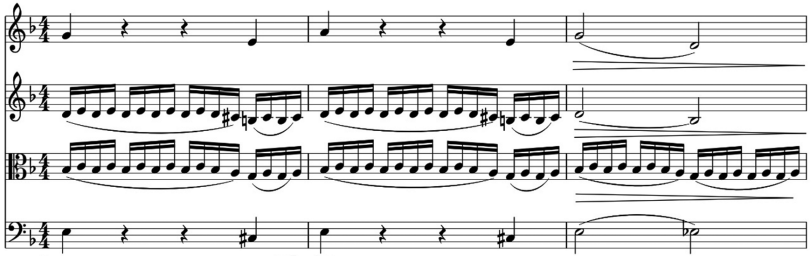
Although the original motive is not recovered in the fourth and last movement of the Quartet, the insistent use of the tone step (upwards in this case) and the minor third (from the tail of the meta-theme) in the last movement is enough to provide a sense of motivic connection throughout the work (Ex. 7). We have already mentioned some examples of Ravel's Quartet writing that Cassadó – as well as other Spanish composers like Turina – mimicked, such as types of tremolo, *sforzando*, or *pizzicato*. In addition, Cassadó's Quartet no. 1 also has the extensive use of the one-tone and semi-tone step in common with the Ravel Quartet. Both works seem to focus on the tone-step as part of the

14 Stowell, Robin. "Traditional and Progressive Nineteenth-Century Trends", in Stowell, Robin (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to the String Quartet* (Cambridge Companions to Music), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 255.

derivation towards chromatism and use it in repetitive accompaniment figures that acquire an *ostinato* character (Exs. 5a-b).

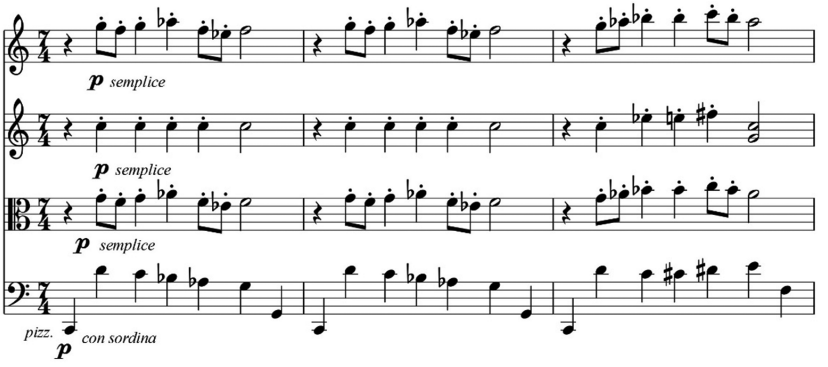


Example 5a: Cassadó, Quartet no. 1 in F minor, I, mm. 66–69. © Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, 1931.

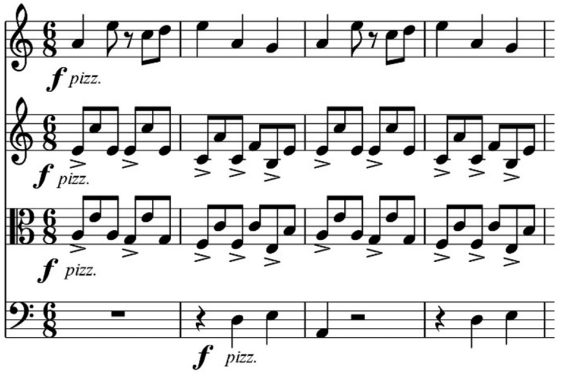


Example 5b: Ravel, Quartet in F major, I, mm. 41–43.

Regarding the use of *pizzicato*, it is interesting to note that Cassadó starts the second movement of his first Quartet with *pizzicato* in the cello and a rhythmical staccato motive in the remaining instruments (Ex. 6a), which is reminiscent of the rhythmical *pizzicato* beginnings in the Quartets by Ravel (Ex. 6b) and Debussy. Incidentally, Ravel uses the rhythm from the Spanish dance *fandango* in this motive of the second movement, another example of the cultural parallels between his Quartet and Spanish works.



Example 6a: Cassadó, Quartet no. 1 in F minor, II, mm. 1–3. © Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, 1931.



Example 6b: Ravel, Quartet in F major, II, mm. 1–4.

As evident from the musical examples exposed so far, there are also Spanish sonorities in Cassadó's first Quartet, if not to the same degree as his Piano Trio or the Solo Suite. The folkloric colour is created mainly through highlighting the second note of the scale that is sometimes diminished and, in this way, introduces the Phrygian majorised mode to the harmonic structure. The main motive of the first movement (Ex. 4) is displayed several times throughout this movement with the second lowered, for example in the first violin part in measures 23–28. Furthermore, the second movement of the same Quartet contains an unequivocal and curious reference to Manuel de Falla's famous *Danza del Ritual*

del Fuego in its middle section, mimicking both rhythmical structure, accompaniment and harmonic progressions of measures 99–106 from Falla's work, although the melodic context here is different.[15]

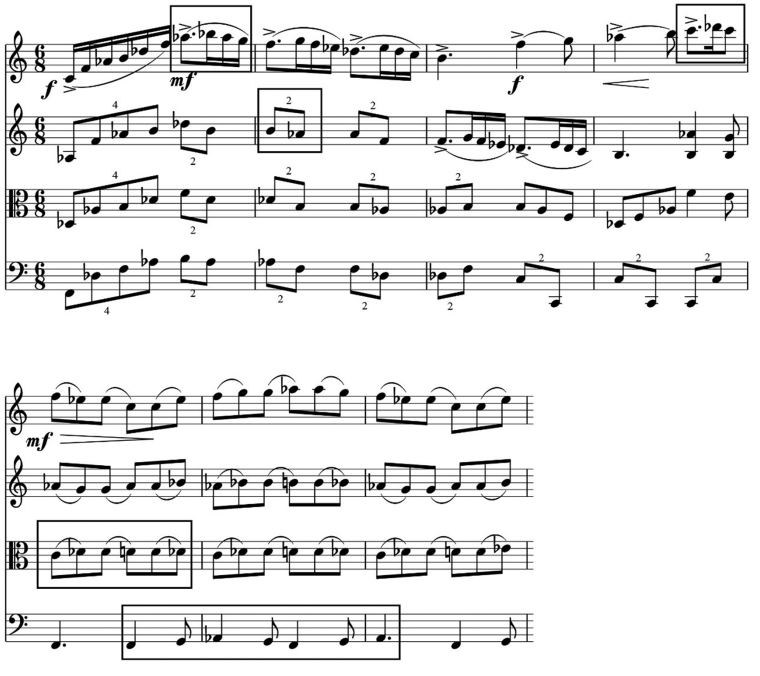
As already mentioned, the structure of the Quartet no. 1 has a cyclic character and includes the use of a meta-theme, two aspects present in both Ravel's and Debussy's String Quartets. The first movement of Cassadó's Quartet shows a partial sonata form with a clear exposition, development and recapitulation, although only two of the three motives from the exposition return in the recapitulation and the very first motive, the meta-theme, ceases to appear after the development section. The second movement, *Allegretto tranquillo*, resembles a *scherzando* and is written in small ternary form, A-B-A, completed with a small coda. Like the majority of movements in Cassadó's Quartets the A-section is structured around two classically contrasting themes, which in this case include one with a dance-like folkloric character and a second, more expressive legato motive, marked *con affetto*. Both the dance-like *staccato* theme (Ex. 5) and the expressive legato motive develop out of the downward tone step from the meta-theme in the first movement, as does the main motive in the middle section.

The third movement, marked *Tempo di elegia*, displays a chorale in the dark tonality of C sharp minor, with a slow motive in minims that methodically moves between the four voices, and is structured in small ternary-form. The middle section exposes a more rhythmical and dramatic motive to contrast the regular minims of the first motive, and, although there are again folkloric details such as the drones in perfect fifths and parallel perfect fourths, there is no clear Spanish flavour to either motive. The dominance of the low register of the instruments in this movement – contrasted with a particularly high and luminous ending – connects with both the first and last movement of the Quartet that display similar gravitational pulls towards dark sonorities, making this one of the identity traits of the Quartet.

The fourth movement is in a somewhat larger form, A-B-A-B-A, again with two sharply contrasting sections; a rhythmical, heavily accentuated group of motives aggressive and a lyrical section, marked *con dolore*. In example 7 the cello part displays the main motive in measures 17–19, which, as noted, contains an inverted form of the meta-theme

15 The measures here mentioned are from the piano version of the piece by Falla.

from the first movement, but it must be noted that the main characteristic of this movement is the use of rhythm rather than the intervallic pattern. A number of key rhythms construct the theme with frequent superposition of binary and ternary rhythms as well as displaying the accentuation in different ways within the 6/8 time signature. Example 7 shows the beginning of the movement where these rhythmical motives (marked with boxes) are presented and juxtaposed and, throughout the movement, the motives develop and are combined in different ways, progressing gradually towards a more aggressive character.



Example 7: Cassadó, Quartet no. 1 in F minor, IV, mm. 13–19 (with the rhythmic motives marked with boxes). © Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, 1931.

The unavailability of a score copy in the case of the second and third Quartets makes any thorough analysis of the evolution within the three Quartets difficult, but the previously mentioned recording of the performance in Madrid by *Cuarteto Cassadó* allows us to at least gain a general overview of Cassadó's treatment of the string quartet genre.

In general terms, there is a progression from an idiom closer to national-romanticism to a more generalist postromantic style. Cassadó's writing gradually favours the development of rhythm and accentuation as well as heightening postromantic traits such as chromatism, unresolved dissonances and added sevenths and ninths to the chord progressions, while decreasing the use of the Phrygian majorised mode. There is a shift towards more aggressive accentuation and sharp rhythms, especially visible in the third Quartet, as well as towards stark and quick contrasts between characters and styles of the motivic material. Furthermore, the experimental side of Cassadó's harmonic, technical and melodic writing becomes more evident in Quartets no. 2 and 3.

In the second Quartet, divided in three movements of approximately equal length, the Ravelian influence from the first Quartet is exacerbated and the cyclic development of the motives is developed further. The last movement of the Quartet displays a rhapsodic *recitativo* where motives from previous movements are recovered and intertwined with impressionist transitions of flowing tremolo motions and light *staccato* movement after which a second and more dramatic section, marked *Allegro assai e con brio*, finishes the Quartet. The result is the least cohesive movement of the Quartets and stylistically the most volatile, moving between postromanticism and impressionism with some shrill dissonances, unison chromatism and a cacophonic quality in the musical high points. The impressionist character is emphasised in a different way in the second movement called *Cansóne e Pavana*, most likely in reference to the famous *pavanes* by Fauré and Ravel, where Cassadó combines techniques such as double-stop harmonics and parallel fourths to achieve an ethereal and exotic colour. The second motive is the most surprising, displaying a generalist folkloric melody in the viola accompanied by parallel perfect fourths and chord progressions moving between B mayor (#9), E minor (add4) and F# minor.

In the third and last Quartet the abruptness of the shifts between impressionism, postromanticism and folkloric elements become more exaggerated, while the Ravelian influence and the folkloric colour fade. The chromatism of the harmonic progressions is increased further, together with accumulated unresolved leading-tones – mainly major sevenths and minor ninths – and the preference for the low register of the instruments that Cassadó shows throughout the three Quartets

reaches its peak in this last work, where the dark intensity is reminiscent of the String Quartets of Kodály, Dohnányi and Janáček.

In the first movement, the small ternary form, employed in most of Cassadó's quartet movements, is expanded to an A-B-A-B-form, separated by several abrupt transitions and a development section, which emphasises further the contrast between motives. The second movement uses exoticism with a pentatonic motive that combines 2/8 and 3/8 time signatures, as well as more classically outlined neoromantic motives, and the tempo indication – *Vivace e con spirito. Allegro malinconico* – is a clear example of the increasing shifts in character with a number of different sonorities juxtaposed and explored throughout the work.

The third movement presents a long lyrical solo cello *recitativo* with accompaniment that culminates with the known Catalan folksong *El cant dels ocells*. Popularised by Pau Casals, it appears several times in the original minor version as well as in a majorised version. This is also the only instance in the Quartets where Cassadó breaks the egalitarian balance between the instruments in his Quartet writing in favour of the cello.

The experimental and strangely heterogeneous character of this last Quartet is somewhat mitigated by the fact that the fourth movement recovers the haunted and agitated character of the first movement and similarly circles around rhythmical accentuation. The sonorities here seem to build on the fourth movement of the first Quartet in its focus on rhythms and sharp accentuation. The dissonant sections and chromatism are combined with a sharply rhythmical motive that hammers through the movement with the heaviest accentuation displayed in the entire set of Quartets. The movement is culminated with intense outbursts, displaying a progression in fortissimo from Cm7(b9), to Cm7(#9) and then Cm7(b10), intertwined with lyrical passages and chromatic runs in unison.

Conclusions

The three String Quartets by Cassadó are, without doubt, a worthy addition to the Spanish string quartet repertoire, and the two last Quartets deserve to be published and presented to performers and audience, which

would further explore the musical challenges and possibilities within them.

Gaspar Cassadó was not only one of the greatest cello virtuosi of the century**,** but as this first review of his String Quartets have shown, he was a composer of wider scope and style than what is usually conceded and left a substantial and varied œuvre. Cassadó's Quartets are full-length works that explore to different extents and in different ways all the stylistic elements that formed part of Cassadó's musical idiom. It is noteworthy, however, that the Spanish folklorism, so dominant in other contemporary works (such as the Piano Trio or the *Sonata Española*), is only a secondary characteristic in Quartet no. 1 and diminishes further in the subsequent Quartets, in spite of the presence of occasional folkloric quotes or references. In these works, Cassadó appears to have been less influenced by previous Spanish quartets, such as his father's *Cuarteto Español*, and more inspired by French impressionism, especially Ravel. Indeed, similarities to contemporary Spanish works, such as the *Serenata* by Turina, are due in greater respect to the mutual influence from impressionism, than to the Spanish influence on Cassadó's style. Ravel's String Quartet stood as model for Cassadó's immersions in the genre regarding several significant aspects: the movement structure – particularly for the *scherzando*-styled second movements – the cyclic character of the motivic development, the chromatism and the way that techniques like tremolo or *pizzicato* were used. Cassadó mostly adheres to classical structures in his Quartets, using the small ternary form, the sonata form or occasionally a more rhapsodic approach. The experimental side of these works instead lies in the many stylistic changes and contrasting characters that Cassadó combines, including pentatonism, double-stop harmonics, continuous parallel fourths and fifths, neoclassicism, chromatism, repeated dissonances, uneven and changing time signatures or superposed binary and ternary rhythms. It is interesting to note the development within the Quartets towards denser and more aggressive accentuation and postromantic harmonic tension, away from nationalism and the lightest elements of impressionism. In the third Quartet, the Ravelian influence diminishes in favour of a stricter motivic structure with less sonorous effects and more romantic intensity.

The Cassadó Quartets seem to constitute another example of the effect French impressionism had on Spanish twentieth-century nation-

alism, with the added detail in this case that the influence, after being experimented with and developed in different ways through the first Quartet, diminishes in the third, in favour of more postromantic sonorities. The Quartets are the only instance in Cassadó's opus where such a development of his compositional idiom takes place, and it is interesting to note that the progressions towards a more rhythmically centred, less impressionist and more harmonically dense style is hardly repeated in Cassadó's later works, but instead the more purely pan-Spanish nationalist idiom of the contemporary *Sonata Española* and the Solo Suite are used as stylistic models. Cassadó, after deciding to relegate composition to a hobby, continued to experiment with neoclassicism and postromanticism, but in smaller formats, dedicating most of his compositions efforts to miniatures for cello and piano from the late 1930s onwards.

From this discussion on Cassadó's Quartets, we can conclude that the change in commitment to the activity of composing music seems directly related to the genres used by Cassadó, as well as his development of genre. In the String Quartets, the performer-facet of Cassadó is placed in the background and is only hinted at in the idiomatic, well-conceived and comfortable instrumental writing of the cello part. This formalist and well-achieved balance between the four instruments in his quartet writing can be contrasted with the tendency in later works for cello and piano to clearly favour his own instrument.

Cassadó was still a young composer when writing the Quartets, between thirty and thirty-six years old, and as the recordings of Quartets no. 2 and no. 3 show, the degree of experimentation with style increases through the String Quartets and exceeds that of practically any other work by the cellist. It therefore seems clear that Cassadó's decision to focus on his performance career, although it did not prevent him from continuing to write music, affected what and how he composed. The latter part of his career was focused to a much higher degree on the function of his music, as he increasingly composed music that he could perform himself. One wonders what compositions could have been produced by his pen, had he decided to concentrate on composition instead of performance, given the long compositional career that still lay ahead of him in 1933, and whether the evolution seen in the Quartets would have continued in a similar direction.