

## The Peter Gellhorn Edition: General Statement

A collection of Peter Gellhorn's papers, including autograph manuscripts for all of his extant compositions, was donated to the British Library on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2010 and 20<sup>th</sup> July 2011 as Music Deposit 2010/15. The official reference for the collection is now MS Mus. 1800, and a complete catalogue can be found at <http://www.petergellhorn.com/sheet-music>. Alongside sketches and drafts, the composition manuscripts include a number of autograph fair copies, written in ink, clearly notated, and with few corrections, suggesting that Gellhorn intended them to be regarded as authoritative. The manuscripts were donated by members of Gellhorn's family, and since the vast majority of pieces were not published, there are generally no conflicting versions to consider. These fair copies can therefore be used as the copy texts for an edition of Gellhorn's music.

The present edition aims to plot a path between two different approaches to transcription. On the one hand, the clarity of the autographs makes it possible to create urtexts, scores that accurately represent Gellhorn's precise markings. On the other hand, Gellhorn was not always consistent in his approach, and he did make some mistakes. Since the primary audience for RCM Editions are performers, it has been necessary to make some corrections for the sake of making these scores usable.

The balance between these two approaches has been maintained in several ways. On the urtext side, the vast majority of Gellhorn's notation has been preserved exactly as it stands in the manuscript. Further, a full scholarly framework has been presented for each piece, outlining all the necessary details of the sources consulted and their condition. Finally, any changes made to the scores are clearly outlined below (for general practices) and in the prefaces to individual works (for specific issues). The performer-focussed ethos of the RCM Editions has been upheld through the fact that the scores themselves have been kept clear of editorial paraphernalia. Instead, the goal here has been to produce clear and easy-to-read material, free from the clutter of extra brackets and footnotes. The information on corrections and changes is readily available in other locations for those who wish to consult the details. In addition, editorial decisions have generally come down on the side of the performer if it is felt that there is any risk of Gellhorn's notational practices causing confusion (see the discussions of individual musical aspects below).

Overall, Gellhorn's notational style became noticeably neater and more consistent over the course of his life. While his earliest works require substantial modifications, the later works required very few (if any) corrections. Nonetheless, it is important to state that the following remarks have been applied, at least in principle, to all of the works in the present edition.

### Pitch

Gellhorn's notation of pitch is exceptionally clear and unambiguous. His corrections to a manuscript occasionally made a pitch illegible, but in these cases he would write the letter name of the note next to it to ensure it would be correctly recognised (see ex.1). Gellhorn's concern for pitch also expressed itself in the plethora of cautionary accidentals that litter his scores. Any modified note will receive an accidental cancelling it as soon as it changes back, regardless of key signature or how many bars have elapsed. Very occasionally they are given in parentheses, but mostly they appear unqualified. While many of these

accidentals might seem unnecessary, all of them have been reproduced in the present edition, as they serve the practical purpose of resolving any potential disputes over the correct note, particularly where there are clashes between parts.

Ex.1: *Kleine Suite für Oboe und Klavier*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movt. m.41, with the “as” indicating an A<sup>b</sup>.  
Source: MS Mus.1800/4/1.



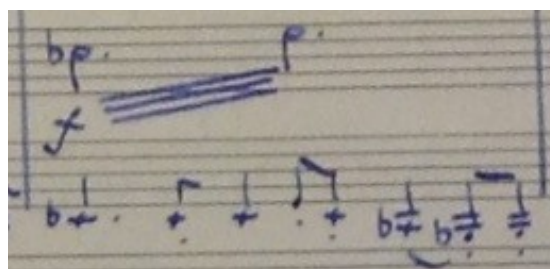
The care Gellhorn took with his notation of pitch could easily lead one to think that therefore we would be unlikely to find any incorrect notes, but unfortunately this is not the case. Accidentals are occasionally omitted when they are clearly implied, usually by octave motion or octave doublings. Further pitch errors were flagged by performers in workshops on these pieces, with justifications ranging from the harmonic feel of a passage to the clear absence of a clef change. On the whole, though, corrections to pitch have only rarely been necessary.

## Rhythm and beaming

As with pitch, Gellhorn's notation is mostly unambiguous as to rhythm and beaming, and has therefore been straightforward to reproduce. However this area also sees the greatest number of oddities in Gellhorn's notational practice, and number of clarifications and modifications have been necessary.

In the case of tremolos, for example, his approach is simply incorrect, making the understandable mistake of thinking that the value of the two notes should add up to the duration, rather than both being of the full duration (see ex.2). These have been corrected throughout.

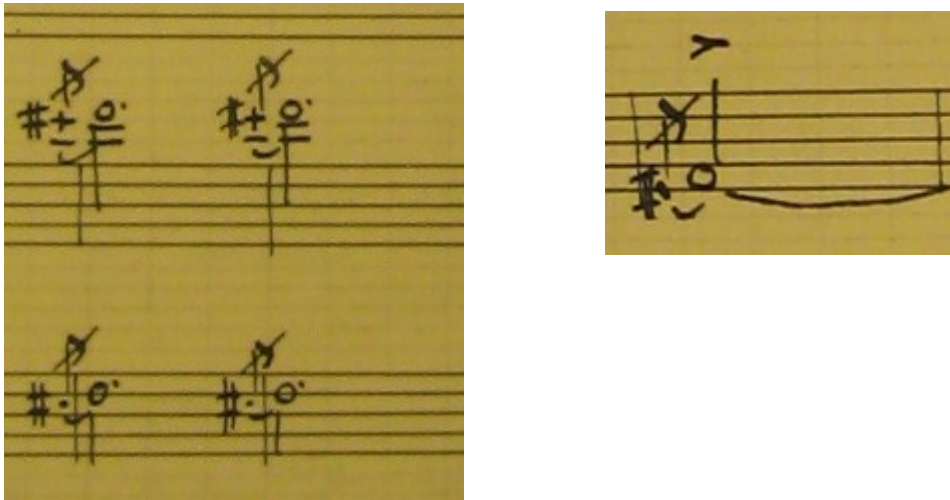
Ex.2: *Sonata for Two Pianos*, 1<sup>st</sup> movt. m.12, second piano. Source: MS Mus.1800/5/3.



Gellhorn would also occasionally notate grace notes prior to the barline if the note they are attached to is the first note in the bar (see ex.3a). This unusual practice is all the more

puzzling for the fact that he marked these grace notes as *acciaccaturas*, which by definition come before the beat, and therefore do not need to be literally shown as occurring before the bar. Further, he was not consistent with this practice, even within the same piece (see ex.3b). Having said that, the few occasions on which this notation appears ultimately cause little confusion for the performer, since the two versions do not actually suggest especially different meanings. Rather, they seem to be two different ways of notating the same thing. There is therefore no need to modify Gellhorn's notation here, and the markings are preserved as in the manuscript.

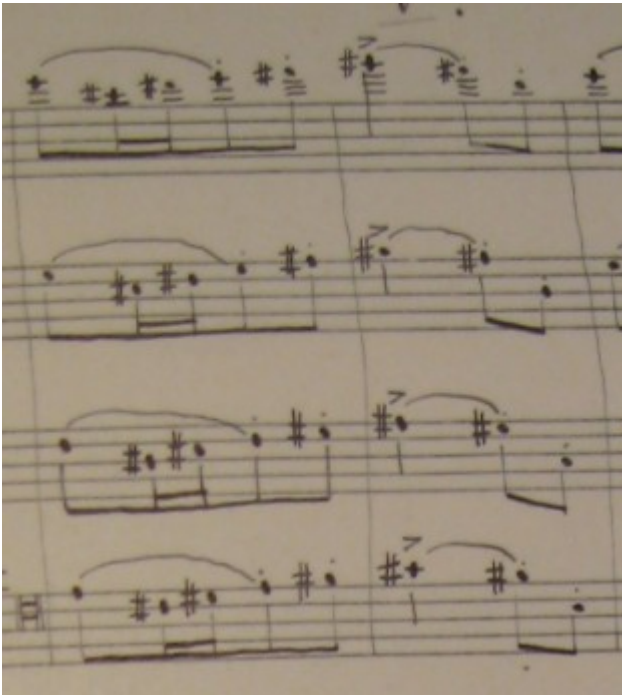
Ex.3: Second String Quartet, 3<sup>rd</sup> movt., a) mm.18-19, violins; b) m.129, violoncello. Source: MS Mus.1800/4/1.



Consistency is also an issue for beaming. Although Gellhorn's markings are never ambiguous, he does not always beam rhythmic groups in the same way. For differences between works, this is not much of an issue. There is no reason not to reproduce the beamings exactly as Gellhorn gave them in each individual piece. However, problems arise when the alternative versions occur within a single piece, as we see in the final movement of the First String Quartet (see exs.4a, 4b). Unlike in the case of grace notes, the two beaming patterns could potentially carry different meanings for phrasing. This raises something of a dilemma. On the one hand, Gellhorn's markings are characteristically clear. On the other, there seems to be no musical reason for the two different patterns. Everything about the way the phrases are presented, aside from the beaming, implies that they ought to be played the same way every time. Nonetheless, the present edition has opted for preserving the beaming as given in these cases. Aside from a wish to avoid opening up a question as to which pattern to adopt as the 'correct' one, there is fundamentally no difficulty in reading either of these patterns. Instead, the issue is one of interpretation, something that seems best left in the hands of the performer.

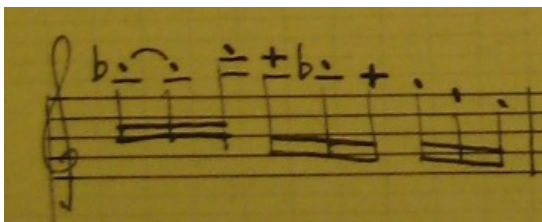
Correspondingly, changes have been made in areas where the rhythmic notation might cause more serious reading problems, particularly in extended passages of triplets. Here Gellhorn often opted to leave out the tuplet brackets and '3' markings, a common practice that saves time on the part of the transcriber or typesetter. The present edition follows Gellhorn's markings precisely in this respect, although in a few instances a triplet marking has been reintroduced where it is felt that extra clarity is necessary. However, he seems to have felt that this practice generated some ambiguity where triplet groups consist of a longer note and a shorter note. He therefore often (though not always) notated these as

Ex.4: First String Quartet, 5<sup>th</sup> movt., a) mm.2-3; b) mm.22-23. Source: MS Mus.1800/4/1.



three equal notes, tying two of them to indicate the longer note (see ex.5a). Similarly, he would add superfluous duplet markings as cautionaries within extended passages of triplets to show where the rhythm changes. Although these decisions are understandable, they in fact seem more likely to cause a performer to trip up over reading them. The ties in particular might well prompt unnecessary questions as to whether the marking is in fact a slur (suggesting gentle re-articulation) rather than a tie. To avoid any confusion, all examples of two tied triplets have been condensed into a single note of the same value (see ex.5b), and the extra duplet markings have been removed.

Ex.5: *Capriccio* for violin and piano, violin, m.26, a) in manuscript; b) in edition. Source: MS Mus.1800/4/1.



## Articulation

Gellhorn's articulation markings are clear and mostly consistent, and therefore easily transferred to the present edition. However some corrections are necessary in this area, particularly in relation to slurs (staccatos and accents are notated more assiduously and only rarely require emendation). Here the criteria for assessment is the surrounding musical context. In passages with repeated phrases, for example, one repeat lacking a slur that the others all possess suggests an error rather than a deliberate decision.



Similarly, if two or more lines contain identical music material and only one lacks an articulation marking, it is clear that a correction is necessary.

The only substantial editorial change has been to slurs that cross staves in piano parts. Gellhorn's approach of drawing slurs straight from the lower staff to above the material in the upper staff and vice versa (see ex.6a for an illustration) is difficult to accurately reproduce, and risks looking clumsy. In the present edition, it has been deemed preferable to use the more conventional multi-arc slurs where possible (see ex.6b). In making this decision, the key concern has been to preserve the meaning of Gellhorn's original notation. As in the manuscript, all of the notes under the marking are shown to be slurred together. However, the new version is visually clearer.

Ex.6: Sonata for Two Pianos, 1<sup>st</sup> movt., first piano, m.155-156, a) in manuscript; b) in edition. Source: MS Mus.1800/5/3.

The image shows two versions of musical notation for two staves. On the left (a) is the original manuscript, showing a single, long, curved slur that starts in the lower staff and arches over to encompass notes in the upper staff. On the right (b) is the edited version, which uses two separate, multi-arc slurs: one in the upper staff and one in the lower staff, both connected to the notes they encompass. The edited version also includes a dynamic marking 'ff' in the lower staff.

## Dynamics and expressive markings

Gellhorn used a conventional range of dynamics that have been straightforward to reproduce as written. He often (though not always) used dashed lines to indicate the duration of crescendos and diminuendos, and again these appear as in the manuscripts. One slight issue with his dynamics is that he could be inconsistent from piece to piece as to whether or not they appear above or below the staff. Standard practices have been adopted here: dynamics appear above the staff for vocal lines, below the staff for instrumental lines, and in between piano staves (unless the dynamic is clearly meant to indicate solely the lower staff, in which case it appears below). Occasionally this necessitates other changes, particularly in instances where dynamics appear both above and below a staff. The approach in the present edition has been either to find a way to combine the two markings, or to remove one if it is rendered superfluous by the other. The horizontal placement of dynamics has been taken as closely as possible from the manuscripts.

Gellhorn's dynamic markings can often be quite limited, especially in the later works, and any other expressive indications are almost entirely absent. He would occasionally write *legato* or *staccato*, but very little beyond that. Performers might feel that the music is somewhat bare as a result, but the temptation to add anything extra has been resisted for the sake of representing as faithfully as possible the contents of the manuscripts.

## Tempo

Tempo markings for the starts of works and movements have been reproduced exactly as Gellhorn wrote them. Tempo fluctuations within pieces are more complex, as Gellhorn's placement practice was not consistent. In general, though, he seems to have treated *ritardando* and *accelerando* (and the like) as a variety of expressive marking, and so often wrote them underneath the staff alongside dynamics. Placement below the staff is not where modern performers would expect to see tempo fluctuation markings, so they have been moved to the standard location above the staff to improve readability. However, in deference to Gellhorn's understanding of these indications as expressive, they have been presented in italics (as is usually the case for expression markings) rather than straight or bold formats. Occasionally Gellhorn combined dynamic indications with tempo changes, e.g. "*poco a poco cresc. ed accel*". Since it is impossible to separate the two elements without changing Gellhorn's meaning, such markings have been left unaltered in the present edition.

## Formatting and Layout

The overall page format for each piece adopts that of the original manuscript. Broadly speaking, pieces written in portrait format have been reproduced as such, and where landscape format was used, this has also been preserved. However there is often only a rough equivalence, as a number of the scores use non-standard page sizes and layouts. The two exceptions to this principle are the scores for *Dance of the Dead* and *Thoughts on a Chinese Tune*, where a landscape layout was deemed more practical for two pianists than the portrait original.

For some pieces, Gellhorn condensed two instruments, voices, or lines onto single staves in order to save space on the page. In every case the score is clear how the two parts should be divided. Since the present edition suffers from no concerns over space, separate staves have been used in order to render the scores easier for performers to read.

Although it has not been possible to arrange in all cases (particularly for the two string quartets), instrumental parts and scores with a single piano have been formatted to facilitate page-turns.

Dr. Bruno Bower