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The Music of Maurice Ohana

Caroline Rae

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Sketch of Maurice Ohana by the novelist Laurence Cossé
Made during rehearsals for the première of *Office des oracles* at La Sainte-Baume, August 1974

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2000 by Ashgate Publishing

Reissued 2018 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Typeset in Times Roman by ICA Music.

A Library of Congress record exists under LC control number: 00061800

ISBN 13: 978-1-138-73162-2 (hbk)
ISBN 13: 978-1-315-18893-5 (ebk)

For my father and mother

Contents

List of Plates

List of Tables

Preface and Acknowledgements

Maurice Ohana was recognised as one of the leading composers of his generation in France, and much of continental Europe, as long ago as the 1960s. Since his death in 1992, his music continues to be performed, recorded and broadcast and a prize has been established to his memory. Both innovative and forward-looking, he contributed to almost every vocal and instrumental form, his work including three operas, a host of choral and other vocal music, music-theatre, several large-scale works for orchestra, seven concertos, three string quartets, other chamber works for diverse ensembles and much solo instrumental music. His music has been championed by many leading performers and conductors including Rostropovich. Yet, in Britain much of his work still remains to be discovered. Ohana did not follow the serialist path of the years following World War II, nor did he join his contemporaries at Darmstadt. As a result his music, like that of Dutilleux and many others, was excluded from representation at the Concerts du Domaine musical and was not imported to Britain at the time when the programming policies of Boulez and Sir William Glock were at the peak of their influence. Consequently, the British view of French music since 1945 became largely synonymous with the music of Messiaen and Boulez to the exclusion of others who achieved recognition beyond our shores.

My interest in the music of Maurice Ohana began in the early 1980s. Finding some recordings of his music almost by chance in the library of the Maison Française in Oxford, it was clear that here was an innovatory composer who was part of the compositional mainstream, avant-garde but not serialist. Curious to learn more about this intriguing figure who, like Dutilleux, was esteemed in France yet almost unknown in Britain, I approached the late Rollo Myers who not only lent me more recordings but, most crucially, provided me with an introduction to the composer. I first met Maurice Ohana in October 1982 when I went to live in Paris on a French Government Scholarship. Once immersed in the musical life of the city (I was a piano student of Madame Yvonne Loriod-Messiaen at the time) I became aware of two distinct, compositional factions: those who had been students of Messiaen or were involved with IRCAM and received commissions from the Ensemble intercontemporain; and those who were not. Ohana, Dutilleux, Marius Constant and many others, belonged to the latter category. Composers of one group could not be comfortably mentioned in the company of the other. Any frustration Dutilleux may have felt in being overlooked by Boulez must have been tempered by the recognition he achieved in the United States early in his career. Ohana and Constant were not so fortunate.

The music of Maurice Ohana belongs to the French compositional mainstream, yet the complexity of his cultural background prevents him from

being described simply as a French composer. A British citizen, born in north Africa of Spanish-Gibraltarian parentage, educated, trained and resident in France, Ohana's bureaucratic nationality did not correspond with his cultural identity. Never a problem in France, where the cultural continuum from which he stemmed was readily understood, his music was accepted as their own. In Britain and the United States, the predilection for nationalistic programming by many concert promoters has prevented Ohana from being placed in a convenient musical pigeon-hole and thus, ironically, the cultural complexity which should be a key to understanding his music has been one of the primary causes of his comparative neglect.

In France and mainland Europe Ohana's music, at the time of writing, has been regularly performed, published and available on commercial recordings for more than forty years. Interviews and critical discussion of his music have appeared in France since the late 1950s, yet his work has received little attention in the English language. The surveys of French music by Rollo Myers and Fred Goldbeck, published in the 1970s, recognised the significance of Ohana's then still growing achievement, but it is necessary for an assessment of his music to be brought up-to-date. Not only Ohana but also Dutilleux have, until recently, been overlooked by many British and American scholars. It is the aim of the present study to rectify this omission.

This book is the first detailed study of Ohana's life and music and is the first study in any language to identify the procedures which characterise his mature, compositional style. It is divided into two parts which reflect the main objectives of the study: to set Ohana's work in its musical and cultural context and to identify and define the main features of his musical language and style. Part One discusses Ohana's cultural origins both as the catalyst for his emergence as a composer and as a resonant source for the symbolical and allegorical allusion that permeates his entire musical output. Part One also gives a biographical account of Ohana's life and career and surveys his work up to 1964. Part Two identifies the chamber work *Signes* both as representing the crystallisation of his mature style in 1965 and as engendering a succession of innovatory works which have here been defined as the Sigma Series. The following chapters of Part Two identify and define the main processes of Ohana's mature compositional language with reference to a range of many of his most important instrumental and vocal works and concludes with an assessment of the reception of his music and its historical context. It is hoped that this critical examination of Ohana's music will lay the foundation for future analytical studies.

I am indebted to Maurice Ohana for the interest and guidance he gave to my research from the outset and until his death. I visited him and corresponded with him throughout the decade when I knew him. Our last meeting took place in April 1992. At his Paris flat we often spent many hours playing and discussing his music, usually at the piano, and always in English. Sometimes he would prefer to discuss the music he had performed as a pianist, and which he felt was close in spirit to his own; for example Chopin, Debussy, Falla and Albéniz.

Ohana devoted many hours to our long conversations which took place over a period of ten years. Although he tended not to volunteer explanation about how his music was put together, he responded to my questioning about the processes I was gradually able to reveal through my own analyses. He read much of my doctoral dissertation (University of Oxford, 1989) on which this study is based. He also gave me access to much of his unpublished, personal archive, including some manuscript scores and sketches, various writings (articles, lectures, poems) and drawings. I acknowledge his permission to reproduce some of this material. Since his death the archive material has been in the possession of Solange Soubrane, President of the Association des Amis de Maurice Ohana. I am grateful to her for continuing to keep me abreast of new recordings, performances and festivals which feature Ohana's music, as well as the founding of the Prix Maurice Ohana which is awarded biennially to pianists and composers and other 'Ohanian' projects. I acknowledge her permission to reproduce photographs from the composer's archive. I am grateful to Maître Henri Dutilleux and his wife Geneviève Joy for their interest in this project and for answering my questions. I also thank Marius Constant for providing me with copies of a selection of his writings and other material. I am particularly grateful to Francis Bayer for providing me with copies of documents which even Ohana no longer had in his possession, as well as for sharing his knowledge of the music of Ohana and, more latterly, of Dutilleux.

During Ohana's life-time his publishers made his scores available to me for an unlimited period. I acknowledge and thank in particular Denise George-Jobert of the Société des Editions Jobert and François Derveaux of Gérard Billaudot Editeur. I also thank in this respect the houses of Amphion (Durand), Salabert and Schott Söhne (Mainz). I also wish to thank Corinne Monceau at the Centre de Documentation de la Musique Contemporaine; Gill Jones at the Music Resource Centre at the University of Cardiff; Neil Somerville at the BBC Written Archive Centre in Reading; the library staff of the Bibliothèque de la Radio France at the Maison de la Radio; the staff of the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Bodleian Library and Maison Française in Oxford. I am grateful to the novelist Laurence Cossé for permission to reproduce her drawing of Maurice Ohana and am also grateful to Paulo Pinamonte of the Università Ca'Foscari di Venezia who made known to me the Ohana-Casella correspondence at the Fondazione Cini in Venice. I acknowledge Dr Nick Fisher of Cardiff University School of History and Archaeology who kindly identified and translated some Latin texts. Quotations are in English, the translations of all French sources being my own (the endnotes specify the original language).

I should like to thank the Music Department, Cardiff University of Wales for funding several research trips to Paris during the 1990s, as well as numerous local visits to London and the BBC Written Archive Centre in Reading. I am grateful to the following individuals: Professor Michael F. Robinson, Dr Mike Greenhough, Professor Adrian Thomas, Richard Langham Smith, Pierre-Albert Castanet, Linda Daniel-Spitz and especially my brother Dr Charles Bodman Rae who has given much advice and encouragement during the long gestation of this

book. My thanks are also due to Dr Ian Cheverton, who prepared the musical examples, and to Rachel Lynch my editor at Ashgate. Finally I would like to thank my husband, Peter, and sons, Robert and Charles, for their unending patience and support.

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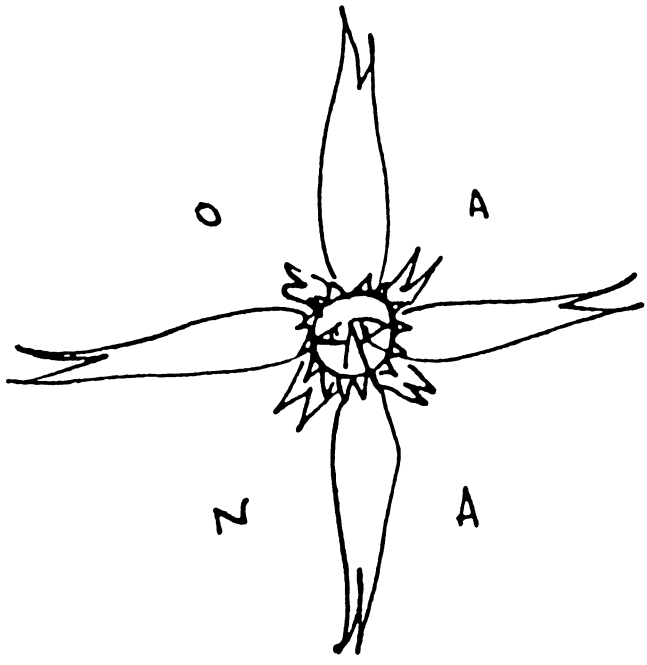
C.A.R.
Machen, March 2000

PART ONE

From the Garden of the Hesperides



CHAPTER ONE

Pianist to Composer: Cultural Roots, Life and Influences

Maurice Ohana was born in Casablanca on 12 June 1913.[1] By his own declaration he was profoundly superstitious and especially so in any matters involving the number thirteen. Modifying his birthdate to 1914, he suppressed knowledge of the true year of his birth. Writers respected this unusual eccentricity until after his death.[2] An ironic turn of fate proved Ohana's fears well-founded as he died on 13 November 1992. Any biographical discussion of Ohana must, however, begin by considering his cultural origins and nationality which have sometimes been a source of confusion. Recognising the significance of Ohana's cultural roots is the gateway to understanding the composer's creative stimuli. As shall be shown, the Spanish and African influences of his youth and early adulthood provided the raw material which was tempered by his French training, education and environment. Together, these three cultures provided the rich and fertile loam which nourished his compositional growth.

Maurice Ohana was once described by André Gide as a French Joseph Conrad.[3] The intriguing comparison highlighted the issue of nationality as distinct from cultural origin which, in the case of both Conrad and Ohana, did not correspond. Like the Ukrainian-born Pole Józef Korzeniowski, Maurice Ohana's cultural lineage was not defined by his bureaucratic nationality; both, albeit for different reasons, were British citizens. Ohana spent most of his life in Paris, yet was not a Frenchman. He was born and grew-up in Casablanca, yet was not a Moroccan. He was a British subject but could not be described as an Englishman. His parents were of Spanish origin yet Ohana was not simply a Spaniard. The southern culture from which he stemmed reaches beyond the political boundaries of any one country and in his later years he held nationality of more than one state.[4] Maurice Ohana's cultural background is full of contradictions which conspire to make him difficult to place for those who desire the convenience of tidy labelling by nationality. For this reason, Ohana tended to speak more of cultural roots and geographical influence than of nationality. The complexities of nationhood and origin have contributed to the neglect of Ohana's music in the United Kingdom; those who are not readily categorised tend to be excluded. While such complexities are easily understood by those belonging to the same Southern culture, or whose origins were internationalised as a result of the Diaspora, they have represented a source of confusion when viewed from a northern, Anglo-Saxon perspective. In France, where fascination for the exotic and acceptance of the eclectic is almost tradition itself, the issue has rarely been problematic, his country of adoption having always claimed his music as its own.

When describing his cultural origins himself, Ohana liked to identify his birthplace as the 'balcony of Europe', drawing attention to the proximity of southern Spain and north Africa as a meeting point of cultures. The Morocco of his youth, Casablanca in particular, represented a melting-pot of races and creeds with the cosmopolitan mix of Berbers and Arabs together with French and Spanish, both Christian and Jewish. Ohana ignored the political divisions of the modern world, preferring to evoke more ancient civilisations, associating his birthplace with the mythical Garden of the Hesperides, reputed by many scholars to have been sited in north Africa.[5] While Hesperia was for the Greeks the western land of Italy, the Romans called Spain by this name. In earliest legends the nymphs who guarded Hera's famous golden apples, assisted by the dragon Ladon whom Hercules later slew, were the daughters of Atlas's son Hesperus. They lived on the river Oceanus in the extreme west which has been placed by many in the Atlas mountains.[6] As a mature composer he found that such evocations of ancient myth had greater resonance in the context of his music, much of which draws on mythological sources.

> If one asked me to say where I was born, civil states apart, I would refer to this vast area which later I could locate as a place that fascinates me; the Garden of the Hesperides. A certain place with grazing herds of bulls that Hercules had acquired after killing Geryon [mythical three-headed King of Spain]; a place where a great disaster joined the Mediterranean with the ocean. I turn back to this place, I prowl about it in the quest of some memory I know not of, perhaps that of an earlier life, seeking without doubting the forces which feed my music through a metamorphosis whose powers I would not wish to analyse. It is enough for me to perceive that these are the forces that assure, by their diversity, the continuity of a single idea in all that I write.[7]

The youngest in a large family of eleven children, Ohana stemmed from mixed Jewish-Christian lineage, much of his complex cosmopolitanism resulting from his immediate family background and circumstances. The Ohana family was of Spanish origin but resided for a time in London as well as, more permanently, in French colonial Morocco. The composer's father, Simon David Ohana, was of Sephardic, Andalusian-Gibraltarian origin and was born in Casablanca in 1865, the son of Moses and Jamu Ohana who are recorded on the birth certificate as 'subjects of the Moroccan Empire'. Maurice Ohana's mother, Fortuna Mercedes Ohana (née Bengio) was Castillian Spanish and a Roman Catholic, although her family also had Andalusian roots.[8] The family surname, far from being Irish as is often wrongly assumed by some English speakers, is Andalusian, being derived from the village of Ohanes approximately 20 miles north west of Almería on the southern Spanish coast. Although there are historical ties linking Spain and Ireland, there is no known connection in the Ohana family, the name being correctly spelled without an apostrophe.[9]

As with many Jewish families of southern Spain, the Ohanas had close ties with Gibraltar, although the family had been resident in Morocco for many years. Simon David Ohana chose to formalise the family ties with Britain and in 1894, aged 29 and married with four children, he was granted British citizenship by naturalisation.[10] The Home Office certificate, issued in London, is dated 17

July 1894, the Oath of Allegiance 19 July and the registration 20 July. In accordance with the Naturalisation Acts of 1870, Simon David Ohana and his family were required to have lived in the United Kingdom for at least five years within an eight year period prior to the application. The certificate records their address as 236 Queen's Road, Dalston, London.[11] The four children listed at the time of their father's naturalisation were Semtob, Rachel, Albert, and Isaac, aged seven, five, three years and six months, respectively. It is interesting to note that even during this period the Ohana family returned regularly to Morocco; Semtob and Albert were born in Casablanca.[12] Clearly the Ohanas maintained close ties with north Africa, for business as well as for family reasons and despite the regulations of naturalisation requiring an intention to remain in the United Kingdom, they eventually returned to Morocco permanently.[13] When Maurice Ohana was born nineteen years after his father's naturalisation, he was able to claim British citizenship. Surprisingly, his birth was not registered with the British Consul in Casablanca until 27 November 1939, the date recorded on his birth certificate.[14] Two of Maurice Ohana's sisters, born after the family resettled in Casablanca, inherited the estate in the 1940s and remained there until the property was dissolved in 1965 (the family house was sadly later demolished). Semtob remained in Casablanca until his death in 1979 at the age of ninety-two. Members of the family today live in Spain and France as well as in England and the United States of America.

The Ohanas enjoyed a well-to-do, intellectual and cultured family milieu. In Casablanca, they lived in a large villa at 182 Boulevard d'Anfa, the house where Maurice was born. His mother had been a schoolmistress in Gibraltar prior to marriage and his father, described as a commission agent on his naturalisation papers, ran a business in shipping and exports with a British partner. Very much younger than his brothers and sisters, whom Ohana remembered far more as uncles and aunts than as sibling playmates, his childhood in Casablanca was paradoxically a solitary one. While still a young child his older brothers were leaving home to take up careers in business and the professions, settling in different parts of Europe and the United States. He had slightly closer contact with his sisters whom he recalled as being good pianists. Noémi, his closest sibling, was contemplating a career as a concert pianist and gave Maurice his first informal piano lessons when he was five. Her performance of works by Chopin, Albéniz and Debussy, were among Ohana's earliest memories.[15] At the same time he was nurtured into his Spanish culture. His beloved nanny Titi, an Andalusian gypsy woman for whom he maintained a life-long affection, sang him flamenco songs, many in the 'Cante Jondo' style.[16] His mother taught him many old Spanish legends and encouraged his enthusiasm for the re-telling of these tales in family performances of the traditional, comic puppet-theatre, long popular in Spain and also beloved by Falla and García Lorca. In later life these proved important influences on his own approach to theatre music, on the subjects chosen as well as on the means in which they were executed. Ohana's mother also introduced him to many of the dances of Spain and sang Andalusian lullabies (from the flamenco)[17], as well as songs from the Zarzuela:

> My mother, like all Andalusian women of her time sang and loved music. She had a natural voice. Her repertoire went from the medieval 'chansons de geste' to Spanish songs and the Zarzuela.[18]

Ohana never underestimated the significance of the richness and diversity of his Andalusian heritage, itself a mixture of cultures, races and creeds. In later years he formalised his extensive knowledge of Spanish folk music and began a collection of traditional folk songs from the different regions.[19] While he published a number of articles and sleeve-notes during the 1950s and 1960s and gave several talks, most of his ethnomusicological research remains unpublished, his interest being more for compositional than musicological reasons.[20]

> Andalusia was a focus of tremendous civilisation during 10 or 15 centuries. First came what they call the people from the sea, whom I presume came from Crete, the Middle East and Greece. Cadiz was founded over 3000 years ago by the Greeks, and some Roman poets still mention the dancers of Cadiz as being of Greek descent. Then came the Romans who had an influence as well. Then came the Arabs, the Jews and then the Gypsies to crown the whole thing. And the interesting point about Andalusia is that it achieved such a type of civilisation as not to destroy the sediments that were left by the preceding civilisations but just melted with it. That's how we got finally to what is called Andalusian folk art which is the combination of all those influences.[21]

English, as well as Spanish was spoken in the Ohana household, while the family location in Morocco necessitated the speaking of French, although Ohana recalled that this was spoken more among himself and his siblings than by his parents.[22] Exposed to so many languages at an early age, Ohana alarmed his mother by hardly speaking at all until the age of four.[23] Fluent in three languages by the age of seven, speaking each without accent, Ohana undertook his general education in the French schools of Casablanca and took a baccalauréat in Philosophy in 1932 at the Lycée Lyautey, named after the French resident General of Morocco. (That Ohana remained trilingual throughout his life is witnessed by his publications, written in English, French and Spanish.) Although educated in a Roman Catholic environment, Ohana often emphasised that he was brought up without adherence to any specific religious practice. The differing religious backgrounds of his parents may have fostered a flexible approach to formal worship during his formative years. As an adult he was drawn to the Christian liturgy, perhaps as a result of his prolonged studies of plainchant and he completed a Mass for liturgical, as well as concert performance. Vocal music figures prominently throughout his work and he often said his music sounded best in cathedrals, churches or chapels; the Eglise Saint Séverin was chosen as the most appropriate location for his Memorial Service in Paris which included a performance of his Mass.[24]

Ohana spent his first twelve years and much of his youth in Morocco but travelled regularly to Spain, throughout these early years, to visit other branches of the family in Andalusia, Castille and the Basque Country. The Ohana family also spent summers at Granada, San Sebastian and Biarritz. When Ohana was fourteen, part of the family moved temporarily to Biarritz to enable Ohana's

sister Noémi to continue her piano studies at the nearby Bayonne Conservatoire. Both she and Maurice enrolled. During this period Ohana journeyed many times the length and breadth of the Iberian peninsula on his way to visit his permanent home in Casablanca and had the opportunity to experience the stylistic diversity of folk music of the different regions. As a teenager, he also began to travel into the Atlas mountains, journeys that he continued to make well into his maturity. He sought out the Berber tribes and took part in their daily activities, experiencing their music at first hand and participating, when allowed, in their tribal ceremonies.[25] In this way, he absorbed much about their means of improvisation and complex rhythmic patterning, learned many of their tribal choral songs and became familiar with their distinctive micro-tonal melodies. Sometimes he would venture into the most remote parts of the Atlas mountains and beyond to settlements bordering the Sahara desert. The tribal music he heard was not always Berber; a visit to Marrakech brought about an acquaintance with a Guyanan drum-team.

> I visited Marrakech where they have an immense square full of all sorts of dancers, musicians story-tellers and so forth. They assemble and make their living out of practising their art. I was struck by the talent and splendid innovation of the black people – from Guyana I think. They played on very carefully tuned drums which are tuned by heating them and even the sticks are of a very refined type. I watched them and listened to them so much that one day one of them, as a sort of token thanksgiving for my faithfulness, offered to let me play one of the drums, so I went on and played what he had played before. He wasn't too pleased to see that his secret had been captured by a foreigner.[26]

In later years he had the opportunity to broaden his experience of black African music. During World War II he was posted to Kenya where he took advantage of non-combatant interludes to visit black African tribes. The experience fused his memory of their music with the drama of the landscape:

> I happened to be posted to Kenya for a while during the war while travelling from Madagascar to the Mediterranean. I stayed there and was lucky enough to visit the tribes round Nairobi and up to Lake Uganda. I heard some most extraordinary performances by village dancers and choirs which melted so much with the landscape that it really remains a whole in my memory. The colours – a sort of reddish brown dust, even the smell of those big bonfires they build in the centre to dance around. I was deeply struck by their art.[27]

It was not only their rhythms which fascinated him but also their choral singing and their ability to create complex polyphonies which function by timbre. He also recalled a particular occasion at the border between Tanganyika and Uganda where he attended a tribal celebration, including such singing, which lasted a whole day and night.[28] The concept of equal-temperament being entirely foreign, he observed that their vocal inflexion incorporated microintervals which were as much the result of timbre and nuance as their own scales. He had noticed similar vocal characteristics in the flamenco, as well as a variety of rhythmic similarities between black African and Andalusian music. Both involve the use of repetitive, rhythmic patterns which are superimposed to create more complex, resultant

cross-rhythms. Both also incorporate percussive effects and hand-clapping techniques:

> While in Africa during the war, I heard many of the African tribes' music there and found that many of the rhythms played and sung by these native tribes are really very close to the Andalusian rhythms which basically fed my childhood.[29]

As a mature composer Ohana became fascinated by the myriad cross-fertilisations between Spanish and African folk musics which resulted from the migrations of the indigenous populations caused by the colonisation of the Central and South Americas as well as the slave trade. The blending of these traditions in Cuban music was documented by the novelist Alejo Carpentier with whom Ohana became acquainted in the 1950s.[30] That African and Spanish musics became fused together in the Americas and were subsequently re-imported to Europe led Ohana to view them as sibling traditions, both of which were part of his cultural heritage. For this reason Ohana considered the incorporation of certain jazz idioms in his music as a logical extension of African and Afro-Cuban traditions into a contemporary context. His intimate knowledge and personal experience of these traditions were among the most important musical influences that shaped his mature, compositional language.

The vast expanse of the Atlantic ocean touched the shores of both traditions. Ohana often liked to draw attention to the significance of growing-up on the Atlantic coasts of Africa, Spain and France, which he cited as an important influence not only for its historical associations but also for the shaping of his personality. He described the Atlantic Andalusians as quite different from those of the Mediterranean side; one looks eastward in what he called 'claustrophobic smallness' while the other is 'broad and expansive'.[31] It is interesting to note that Ohana chose a house near Carnac in Brittany as his country retreat from Paris. According to his wishes, his ashes were dispersed in the Atlantic ocean off the coast at Carnac.[32]

> I don't appreciate much the Mediterranean. I think that physically I don't belong to the Mediterranean at all, even if spiritually I sort of loot the Mediterranean treasure here and there, especially the Greek mythology which I very much fancy and which is full of teachings and mysterious signs to me. Of course I descend from the Mediterranean civilisation but I think it's very important that one should be faithful to one's geographical roots. I was born on the Atlantic and I find myself much more at ease with the Atlantic landscape and the Atlantic storms and its sunny days, than in the Mediterranean which is a very restrained field of experience to me. In my seaside house in Brittany when I watch the skies and the sea they convey a sort of permanent lesson, a permanent teaching which concerns music just as much as ordinary living, be it only through the enormous proportions of the Atlantic compared to the Mediterranean.[33]

The Professional Path

Following informal piano lessons with his older sister Noémi, Ohana took formal tuition from the age of nine with a local teacher in Casablanca, May Loftus, who was also Mother Sheila at the Convent of Franciscan Missionaries. At the age of eleven, he gave his first public piano recital for a St Cecilia's Day concert at the Convent; indicating a precocious ability, the programme included the Pathéthique' Sonata op.13 of Beethoven and the op.10 No.5 study of Chopin, the so-called 'black key'.[34] In 1927 aged fourteen, he enrolled at the Bayonne Conservatoire where he, and his sister Noémi, became pupils of the Director, the composer Ermend-Bonnal. (Maurice continued his general education at the Lycée de Bayonne.) Ohana performed regularly at the Conservatoire and in 1930 gave a duo recital at the Casino d'Hossegor with a young cellist who later became Professor of Cello at the Paris Conservatoire.[35] Ohana gave several solo recitals in northern Spain. Ohana's outstanding pianistic gifts were encouraged by Bonnal and before the age of eighteen he had performed all thirty-two Beethoven piano sonatas. As a mature composer Ohana did not recall the experience fondly, remembering the pressure from Bonnal to learn the complete cycle almost as a punishment. Even at this early age Ohana instinctively felt ill-at-ease with music belonging to the Austro-German tradition, a repertoire independent of his own cultural roots.

> My judgement of Beethoven's works is most unorthodox. I dislike many of his works, I think some of them are simply unbearable (for example) some of the piano sonatas which I had to study ... . I think he is a very uneven composer – something which happens with practically every composer with very few exceptions ... . Even in his Quartets which I admire and which fascinate me, there are moments where a sort of rhetoric duty shows its ugly ear and he suddenly becomes a bore. But of course, there again, in those last quartets I think lay some of the most beautiful pages that music ever was rewarded with.[36]

In later life Ohana's conscious distancing of himself from Germanic music was to develop into an almost iconoclastic rejection of the Second Viennese School and its followers. While he admired certain works by Mozart, Beethoven and Schumann, their tradition was not to provide the basis from which his own composition was to develop.

> I was not at all inclined towards the German or central European world, which frankly I detest, not because I dislike the music but because it has been so bossy and so tremendously conquering over minds and geniuses which have been taken out of their course by the too strong will of the German school.[37]

While at the Bayonne Conservatoire, Ohana took private lessons from Jéhanne Pâris, the organist at the Eglise St Eugénie in Biarritz whom he described not only as his most important and complete influence at that time, but also as the catalyst for what he called his 'real birth to music'.[38] Under her guidance he discovered many works which remained important to him in later life, including the string quartets of Debussy and Ravel. They read through

scores playing four-hands at the piano. She also made him study solfège as well as Gregorian chant.

> She [Jéhanne Pâris] was a tiny, ugly woman, elegantly dressed and trimmed. She had taught and known all the fabulous names that had made Biarritz a cross-roads of the world, including Prince Yusupov! Her musicianship was unparalleled amongst my teachers.[39]

Ohana's discovery of the writings of Proust, Gide, Dickens and Conrad, to which he was devoted throughout his life, also occurred during this period.[40] He studied at Bayonne until 1931 when he returned to Casablanca to complete his general education. Following the success of his baccalauréat Ohana's father wished him to pursue a more secure profession than that of music. For this reason, Ohana went to Paris in the autumn of 1932 to study architecture. He prepared his entrance exam for the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratif and, after a brief period at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, enrolled at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure in 1934. He studied there for two years, his teachers including Eric Bagge, for 'décoration', and Professor Genuys for 'architecture'.[41] He met Mallet Stephens and visited the workshop of Le Corbusier (thirteen years before Xenakis). Architectural obligations did not prevent Ohana from continuing his musical training, albeit against his father's wishes, and, in 1932, the same year he arrived in Paris, he became a pupil of Lazare-Lévy. Although encouraged by Lévy to enter the Paris Conservatoire, the constraints of Ohana's father prevented him from doing so. He eventually abandoned his architectural studies in June 1936 on the eve of taking the 'niveau supérieur' and chose not to complete his course at the Ecole Nationale Supérieur des Arts Décoratif. Against his parents' wishes, Ohana committed himself to a musical career.

Musical life in Paris of the 1930s was rich and varied. Ohana attended many concerts including those of the Concerts Colonne, Lamoureux and Pasdeloup and was able to hear all the great pianists of the time, including the young Horowitz, Lipatti, Schnabel, Backhaus, Gieseking (whom he heard perform Debussy) and Fischer whose style Ohana recalled as the greatest influence on his own playing.[42] In 1933 he also heard Paul Wittgenstein's first Paris performance of the Ravel Piano Concerto for Left Hand in 1933, a work which was among the few, select scores Ohana kept permanently beside his piano at his Paris flat, even during the last years of his life. He sought out concerts of American jazz, in particular he remembered the thrill of hearing the bands of Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong.[43] At the Fêtes de l'Exposition Universelle of 1937 Ohana discovered another work which was to prove a seminal influence; he attended Falla's *Three Cornered Hat* in the production by Massine and Picasso. This discovery not only initiated his investigation into technical aspects of Falla's musical style, including his use of Spanish folk song, use of instrumentation, linear textures and motoric rhythms, but shaped much of his own approach to theatre music in later years.

From 1936 Ohana maintained the career of a concert pianist. His programmes revealed the individuality of his musical taste and always included works by Scarlatti, Chopin, Albéniz, Falla or Granados, while French music was

represented by Rameau, Debussy or Ravel. He gave his Paris début recital at the Salle Pleyel in February 1936. Of mammoth proportions, the programme clearly reveals his cultural alignment:

Scarlatti	3 Sonatas
Chopin	Barcarolle, Polonaise-Fantasie, F minor Ballade
	Debussy *L'Isle joyeuse,* 'Bruyères' (*Préludes* II),
	'Poissons d'or' (*Images* II)
Granados	'La maja y el ruiseñor' (*Goyescas*)
Ravel	*Sonatine*
Albéniz	'El Puerto', 'Rondeña', 'Triana,' 'El Albaicin' (*Ibéria*)

This performance was followed by another Paris recital at the Salle Chopin the same year. Becoming dissatisfied with his studies with Lazare-Lévy, Ohana took lessons from Frank Marshall. (Ohana accompanied Marshall to Barcelona and eventually to Casablanca as the worsening political circumstances in Spain necessitated.) Ohana also knew Arthur Rubinstein well at this time and often visited him at his home on the Rue Ravignon; apart from Chopin, Ohana played him, on one occasion, Albéniz's 'El Albaicin' which was apparently received with approval.[44] Although Ohana had performed the notoriously difficult *Fantasía Bética*, dedicated to Rubinstein, the sensitive topic of Falla's music was avoided during his visits; Rubinstein disliked the piece, considering it too long, too cluttered with glissandi and generally badly written for the piano.[45] On matters of technique, Rubinstein's main advice was to explain that security and a singing tone was founded on a straight fifth finger. [46]

Between 1936 and 1939, Ohana gave concert tours in France, Holland, Belgium, north Africa and in Spain (despite the Civil War). During the 1937 and 1938 Paris seasons he performed concertos with the Orchestre des concerts Lamoureux under Eugène Bigot at the Salle Gaveau. His performance of Falla's *Nuits dans les jardins d'Espagne* was met with critical acclaim by both Maurice Imbert and Charles Henry, the latter describing Ohana's interpretation as 'un coup de maître'.[47] Ohana formed a duo with the singer Lotte Schöne with whom he toured during the 1936–37 season and at whose home he met the poet Paul Valéry, an acquaintance of the Schöne family. As Valéry was at that time in the process of developing his new theory of the relationship of music and language, it is tempting to ponder whether this chance meeting may have in any way shaped Ohana's later experimentations with language and text. In 1938 Ohana formed a two-piano duo with Alexandre Hoffstein, their Salle Chopin recital in Paris on 5 May that year including Mozart's K.448 Sonata and Debussy's *En blanc et noir*. Together with the piano *Préludes* and *Etudes*, *En blanc et noir* influenced many of Ohana's later works, most notably *Tombeau de Claude Debussy*.[48]

During the late 1930s Ohana met many refugees of the Spanish Civil War who had fled to Paris, the logical and well-established centre for the northward migration of Spanish composers, performers, writers and artists. Ohana's temporary residence at the Maison d'Espagne in the Cité Universitaire from

1938–1940 brought him into contact with many South American, as well as Spanish writers and intellectuals. By the 1950s the circle had expanded to include Rafael Alberti, Pío Baroja, Camilo José Cela and Sergio de Castro who introduced Ohana to Octavio Paz, José Bergamín and Fernando Pereda.[49] Ohana also knew Alejo Carpentier with whom he often discussed Carpentier's extensive researches into Cuban music and ritual practices.[50] He was also acquainted with Gabriel García Márquez who took several lessons in composition from Ohana in 1955.[51]

The early period of Ohana's life profited from a number of chance encounters which proved significant for his personal development. These fuelled his sense of the superstitious and refusal to believe in mere coincidence. With the greater perspective that the advantage of years can bring, Ohana considered these meetings in later life as 'Signs of Destiny'. The first such meeting took place in October 1936 on board ship crossing the Straits of Gibraltar from north Africa to Spain. He happened to encounter the Argentinean flamenco singer and dancer La Argentinita (Encarnación Júlvez López) who was travelling with her guitarist, the legendary virtuoso Ramón Montoya.[52] La Argentinita (1895–1945) was well recognised as an international star not only for her performances of classical Spanish dance and original choreography of music by Ravel, Albéniz, Granados and Falla, but also for her revitalisation of the traditional folk and gypsy forms of the flamenco.[53] Both La Argentinita and Ramón Montoya had been involved in Falla's Festival of Cante Jondo held at Granada in June 1922.[54] Performing with Antonio Triana and her sister Pilar López she established what later became known, under Pilar's direction, as the Ballet Español. La Argentinita danced the roles of Candelas and Lucía (the latter created for her) in Falla's *El Amor brujo*.[55] Massine choreographed roles for her in Falla's *Three Cornered Hat* (miller's wife) and Rimsky Korsakov's *Capriccio espagnol*.[56]

La Argentinita performed throughout Europe and the United States, as well as in South America and was well-known in intellectual circles of Madrid where her closest friends included the playwright Jacinto Benavente, the composer-conductor Ernesto Halffter and the poet Federico García Lorca with whom she recorded his collection of Spanish folk-songs and founded the Ballet de Madrid.[57] (A close friend of Lorca's family, she was god-mother to his nephew and god-son.[58]) Through Lorca she became an intimate friend of the bull-fighter-poet Ignacio Sánchez Mejías whose death in the bull-ring in 1934 was the subject of one of Lorca's last major poems of which she was the dedicatee (under her real name). Lorca had given La Argentinita the manuscript of *Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías*, as well as of *Romancero gitan,* these still being in her possession at the time of her meeting with Ohana.[59]

La Argentinita's choreographed versions of the *Iberia* and *Goyescas* of Albéniz and Granados necessitated a pianist, in addition to a guitarist (she had also performed with Rogelio Machado and José Iturbi). Ohana joined forces with La Argentinita's group and toured with them during the 1936–37 season. They performed music by Falla, as well as Albeniz and Granados, and Ohana composed a number of songs for her including an Alborada in the form of a

Jota.[60] He performed with them in Belgium, Holland, England and France including an appearance in Paris at the Salle Pleyel. Their final appearance together was at the Arts Theatre Club in London, a performance organised by Anton Dolin whom Argentinita knew from New York.[61] Through La Argentinita and Dolin, Ohana was introduced to many of the leading figures in ballet of the time. (After the war, Ohana's widening circle of balletic acquaintances resulted in a number of ballet scores which included two collaborations with Maurice Béjart.) Ohana's collaboration with La Argentinita was of enduring significance for his development as a composer. Not only did she encourage him to compose but urged him to look towards his Spanish roots as the source of his compositional identity. As testimony of her confidence in his ability and commitment, she lent him Lorca's manuscripts of both the *Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* and *Romancero gitan*. Although Ohana still had these manuscripts in his possession at the time of La Argentinita's death in 1945, and when he composed his own setting of the *Llanto* in 1950, they were subsequently returned to her estate.[62]

In the autumn of 1937 Ohana returned to Paris. Wishing to develop his compositional skills and extend the scope of his musical training, he enrolled at the Schola Cantorum. Studying chiefly with Daniel-Lesur, with whom he took counterpoint, he remained at Schola for almost three years.

> I was lucky enough to meet some masters, Daniel-Lesur in particular, who taught me much on a technical level without ever trying to influence my style.[63]

With many musical interests in common, particularly plainchant, early contrapuntal forms and folk music, Ohana and Daniel-Lesur developed a lasting friendship. After the war they worked together on several combined projects; they formed a two-piano duo and collaborated on Lesur's incidental music for *Don Juan* (1947). Lesur's *Sérenade* for string orchestra (1954) incorporates a Spanish folk-song made known to him by Ohana.[64] The nature of musical training at the Schola Cantorum, with its emphasis on the study of plainchant, counterpoint and the Medieval and Renaissance vocal repertoire, proved a decisive influence for Ohana. He spent much time in the analysis of plainchant, not only Gregorian but also Mozarabic which he had heard at Toledo and Santo Domingo de Silos. He found that this music was much closer to his musical tastes and intuition than conventional diatonic structures. His education at Schola led him to discover the technique and craft which enabled him to mould the musical ingredients inherited from his cultural background:

> In order to send into battle all those deep instincts and unconscious learnings of childhood one needs a very strong métier ... . My writing was built entirely upon plainchant in Paris, where I studied at the Schola Cantorum, and by meditating and observing my own folk music.[65]

While at Schola, and still in his twenties, Ohana completed his first essays in orchestral writing; a ballet based on an episode from Don Quixote entitled *La Venta encantada* and a suite, *Les fêtes nocturnes* extracted from his incidental

music for a play by Ives Regnier, *La Joie et le bonheur.*[66] These works are among those the composer later destroyed. He also composed a five movement Suite for piano of which only the final movement, a Toccata, survives.

Ohana's real beginnings as a composer were interrupted by the outbreak of war. Despite volunteering to join the British forces soon after war was declared in September 1939, he was required to clarify his national status with the British authorities as well as to fulfil necessary requirements for registration in accordance with the new National Service Act.[67] Leaving Paris on 12 June 1940 (his twenty-seventh birthday), the British withdrawal at Dunkirk forced him to travel to England by a dangerous and circuitous route via Biarritz and Spain before he was able to embark from Portugal. He eventually arrived in London several months after his departure from Paris and joined the British Army in November 1940. His war-time years are interesting for the unusual advantage that chance circumstance offered for personal, artistic development. Following initial training in artillery, his fluency in three languages resulted in transferral to the Intelligence Corps at Winchester. Subsequently he was seconded to a landing brigade of Royal Marines, Royal Scots Fusiliers and Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. After further training at Winchester and Matlock, he was posted to Scotland for nine months with the 29th Independent Brigade, where he undertook special training in commando and assault at Melrose, Inverary and Scapa Flow. In early 1942, towards the end of his time in Scotland, he gave a recital in the Wednesday Programmes series at the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh. Another huge programme, it comprised three Scarlatti Sonatas, the Chopin Barcarolle, Debussy's *L'Isle joyeuse* and 'Clair de lune' (*Suite Bergamasque*), Albéniz's 'El Albaicin', Granados' Girl and the Nightingale' (*Goyescas*) and Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance.* A local critic described Ohana as 'an interesting young pianist... with fine technical equipment and excellent accomplishment who may go far'.[68]

Ohana first saw active service during a six-month campaign in Madagascar, where he landed from HMS Southampton at Diégo-Suarez on 5 May 1942. He took part in several commando raids (from HMS Southampton and unusually also from HMAS Napier) and was envoy and interpreter with duties in interrogation and counter-espionage with the Field Security Forces. Although not affiliated with the Entertainments Corps, Ohana performed in a Franco-British Gala Concert in aid of the French Red Cross in Tananarive on 4 July 1942; in the presence of the Commander in Chief of the British Forces in Madagascar, Admiral Tennant, he played works by Chopin, Debussy and Falla. In 1943 he was posted to Africa and, spending three months in Kenya, took advantage of non-combatant interludes to search out black African tribes and experience their music. On the way from Kenya to north Africa Ohana became acquainted with the South African poet Roy Campbell. Considering the meeting another of the 'Signs of Destiny' which drew him towards composition, Ohana and Campbell discovered they had much in common: they had both left their country of origin and were serving in the British Army; both had lived in France and Spain; both were drawn to the poetry of Federico García Lorca, Campbell

being one of the first to translate Lorca's poetry into English (curious, given that he had fought in the Spanish Civil War on the side of the Nationalists). Campbell made Ohana the dedicatee of his translation of the *Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* and, like La Argentinita before, encouraged him to reflect on the legacy of his Spanish roots as the source of his compositional style.

In June 1943 Ohana was posted to Cairo and shortly after saw further active service in Greece where he was wounded during a campaign in the Cyclades. Following a period of hospitalisation in Cairo, he met by chance the son of the then Governor of Gibraltar, General Smith-Dorrian, who obtained Ohana's transfer to the Officer Training School at Algiers, (another of Ohana's 'Signs of Destiny'). After further active service during the invasion of Sicily, Ohana received his Commission on 3 March 1944, still holding the badge of the Intelligence Corps.[69] Posted to Naples during the spring of the same year he was liaison officer with the French Maquis. Following the liberation of Monte Cassino in May 1944, he was sent to Rome where his duties at Intelligence HQ required him to learn Italian. He was promoted to full Lieutenant in September 1944 and held the additional promotion of Acting Captain.

Throughout the war, Ohana managed to carry with him five scores which he kept with him in his kit-bag at all times. Studying and assimilating these scores during periods of military inactivity, his selection, like that of the hypothetical marooned sailor on a desert island, is revealing of taste and aesthetic alignment: two works of Debussy, *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and *Nocturnes*; two works of Falla, the Harpsichord Concerto and *El Retablo de Maese Pedro*; the Piano Concerto for Left Hand of Ravel.[70] These scores are among the select few (plus some of Stravinsky and Bartók) which remained permanently beside Ohana's piano at his Paris flat.

> All through the war I had in my kit-bag ... 5 scores which are still on my piano, on my table every day now. I remain faithful to them because much as I go on interrogating them and trying to find their secrets they escape me completely. And I find this most exciting ... they act as an incentive.[71]

Remaining in Rome to the end of the war, Ohana took advantage of increasingly long periods of inactivity at Intelligence HQ and was able to devote much of his time to composition (another of his 'Signs of Destiny'). In the autumn of 1944, still a serving officer, he enrolled in Alfredo Casella's piano class at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia.[72] Although Casella was already in failing health, the contact was nevertheless timely and useful; Ohana played with Casella on two pianos and believed they may have given the first Italian performance of Ravel's Piano Concerto for Left Hand.[73] Casella's dual roles of pianist-composer and personal acquaintance with Debussy and Ravel should have made him an ideal teacher for Ohana, although Ohana recalled often being in disagreement with Casella who was fascinated by the serialism of other composers then at the academy, Dallapiccola and Petrassi in particular. Although Ohana's first important works date from this period, *Enterrar y callar* and the *Sonatine monodique*, his attraction towards non-serial structures did not impress Casella.[74] The year of Casella's death in 1947, Ohana published a short,

commemorative article in *The Music Review*. Ohana recounts Casella rising from his bed, despite all the sufferings of ill-health to take his piano class three times a week. He drew particular attention to Casella's tone colour, interpretations of Debussy and, perhaps more surprisingly, also of Beethoven.

> We were often amazed during his lessons by the quality and orchestral variety of his tone, seldom attained at the piano, especially in his renderings of the last Beethoven Sonatas or the Debussy Preludes.[75]

During Ohana's period in Italy another 'Sign of Destiny' proved to have lasting consequences. In December 1945 Ohana visited Naples to give a recital at the Conservatoire San Pietro a Maiella. While there, he was invited to give a private performance at the home of the Director of the local Institut Français in order that he might meet André Gide who was breaking his journey there for a week while awaiting passage to Egypt. Gide recorded his first meeting with Ohana in his *Journal* :

> Naples, 17 December 1945 ... yesterday, at the home of Pasquier, the Director of the French Institute, an excellent dinner in the company of Maurice Ohana who, after the meal, played some Bach, Scarlatti, Albeniz, Granados and the Barcarolle and fourth Ballade of Chopin quite remarkably.[76]

Their initial meeting led to a lasting friendship. During Gide's stay in Naples Ohana met with him each day for intensive rehearsal and prolonged musical discussion of Chopin. Regular contact and correspondence ensued (chiefly concerning Chopin), lasting until Gide's death in 1951.[77] Ohana collaborated with Gide on the *Notes sur Chopin* (Paris, 1948), choosing and preparing the musical examples, and was among the close circle of friends with whom Gide celebrated the receipt of his Nobel Prize in 1947. They also collaborated on a series of radio programmes on Chopin for the French radio, although this project did not come to fruition. Several of Ohana's visits to Gide's Paris home in the Rue Vaneau, their discussions of Chopin and Mozart, and playing of duets (including the Mozart Fantasy), are recorded in the 'Cahiers de la Petite Dame', *Cahiers André Gide.* It is perhaps remarkable that Ohana and Gide found as many areas of musical taste in common as they apparently did. While Ohana shared many of Gide's views about Chopin, their opinions must have diverged on the subject of Debussy. Ohana already felt closely aligned to the French anti-symphonic tradition and recognised Debussy as one of the most influential composers of the twentieth century. Gide in dramatic contrast, considered Debussy to represent "the quintessence of the worse shortcomings of the French spirit".[78] Although Gide had known Debussy, his friendship with Ohana was certainly closer and, unlike his acquaintance with Debussy, more seriously reciprocated.

Ohana was demobilised in 1946 and resettled permanently in Paris. Intending to wind-down his pianistic career and devote himself to composition gradually, he gave a number of recitals in the immediate post-war period. Following a recital at the Wigmore Hall, London on 15 June 1947, he gave a short tour in the English south and midlands. He made several recordings and gave a short

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Programme

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Ballade in F minor	*Chopin*
Sonatine Moderato — Menuet — Finale	*Ravel*
Pastorale Varice [1st performance]	*Daniel Lesur*
Three Preludes The Interrupted Serenade Bruyeres Feux D'Artifice	*Debussy*

INTERVAL

The Girl and the Nightingale	*E. Granados*
Prelude	*M. O'Hana*
Scherzo [from the "Sonatine Monodique]	*M. O'Hana*
Rondena	*Albeniz*
El Albaicin	*Albeniz*
Ritual Fire Dance	*De Falla*

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Ex. 1.1: Ohana's 1947 Wigmore Hall Recital Programme.

broadcast recital on the BBC Home Service on 22 September 1947 (Ravel *Sonatine* and three pieces of Albéniz from *Iberia*). (He had rehearsed these programmes with Gide.) The Wigmore Hall programme was characteristically large, and included not only the first British performance of Daniel-Lesur's *Pastorale variée*, but two works of his own; Prelude (presumably from the piano suite which he later destroyed) and Scherzo from the *Sonatine Monodique.* (see Ex. 1.1) Drawn between the demands of a pianist and composer, Ohana's post-war years were not an easy period in his personal life. His 1939 marriage to Léa Schulmann was in difficulties, a situation aggravated by his war-time absence. They eventually divorced in 1959.

The period immediately following the end of World War II represents a watershed in the main-stream of European music and was no less so for Ohana who had reached a turning-point in his creative development. At the end of the war, he had a portfolio of less than a dozen pieces (most of which he later destroyed) and despite the 1938 Parisian concert performance of *Les fêtes nocturnes*, was effectively unknown as a composer. By the time of his return to Paris his younger contemporaries were already becoming established; even during the darkest years of the Occupation concert life in Paris had been far from inactive. Absent from the Parisian musical milieu throughout the war, Ohana was forced to carve out his position anew. As a composer of Spanish origin educated into and instinctively part of the French tradition, seeking to develop a musical language based on his cultural roots and a reassessment of the Medieval and Renaissance vocal repertories, Ohana was in an isolated position. Considering the new serialism of his contemporaries involved at Darmstadt to stem fundamentally from the Austro-German tradition which had long felt remote to him both culturally and aesthetically, Ohana naturally felt these techniques to be irrelevant to his own creative promptings. Although Ohana received much practical help from his former teacher Daniel-Lesur, who held an important position at French Radio, he needed to find a means of both announcing his presence as a composer and establishing his independence from the predominant trends of the time. To this end, in 1947 Ohana was the motivating force in bringing together a group of like-minded composers who promoted concerts of their music under the name Le Groupe musical le Zodiaque.

Coming together as a body of composers aiming to rival those of the Darmstadt School, their prime objective was to illustrate that integral serialism represented only a part of the compositional mainstream. The Groupe Zodiaque initially comprised only three composers, Ohana, Alain Bermat and Pierre de la Forest-Divonne. All had been pupils of Daniel-Lesur, Forest-Divonne having left Messiaen's classes at the Conservatoire in favour of the Schola Cantorum. Despite their association with former members of La Jeune France, the Zodiaque composers did not seek to rekindle the ideals of the older group, although some of their aims parallel many of Daniel-Lesur's own interests, folk music and plainchant in particular. The educational atmosphere at the Schola Cantorum with its quite different traditions from that of the Conservatoire, may well have

fostered, albeit indirectly, a sense of confidence in their own non-alignment. In 1948 the Groupe Zodiaque was joined by Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, then studying with Nadia Boulanger, and Sergio de Castro, a former pupil of Falla who was hesitating between the vocations of composer, painter[79] and poet (he also became a friend of Dutilleux.)[80] They saw themselves as crusading knights defending freedom of musical expression against what they considered to be the tyranny of serialism. Some years later Ohana described post-Webern serialism:

> Mere academic sterility ... as intimidating and terrifying as the propaganda systems of the Nazis .... These systems destroy more in music than they create – they remove all the art of risk.[81]

The iconoclastic rejection not only of serialism but all aesthetic dogma was primarily a rejection of Germanic musical thinking (not for the first time in France); while the political structure of the Third Reich had been defeated militarily, Ohana in particular feared Austro-Germanic traditions to be conquering culturally. Such vigorous opposition to contemporary trends may also have been in part associated with the cultural origins of the Zodiaque group members, their aversion to serialism being one of geography as well as of musical taste. While Skrowaczewski is Polish and thus has a tradition of kinship with France, Poland having long considered itself independent from Germanic culture (a feeling which, after the war, was particularly strong), the remaining four members belonged to Latinate cultures. Like Ohana, de Castro was of Spanish origin (son of the Argentinean Ambassador to Geneva) and Bermat and Forest-Divonne were French. The group was unified as much by their diversity as by their similarity of purpose. Considering the music of Latinate and Mediterranean countries to be under threat of annihilation by the all-conquering powers of Teutonic musical thinking, they sought to defend the virtues of their respective cultures. (A similar fear of Teutonic domination is also expressed by Federico García Lorca in many of his lectures.)[82] Although the Zodiaque composers did not publish their ideas as a manifesto, Ohana served as the group representative and spokesman to explain their aims and purpose.

Existing initially more as a compositional protest group, the Zodiaque composers only gradually developed more positive aims. Avoiding the creation of their own dogma, they promoted an organic musical language that should emerge spontaneously from the material itself without recourse to elaborate pre-compositional systems. They set about a reassessment of their respective folk-music traditions and aimed in so doing to restore what they considered to represent a natural and true line of development from their most ancient cultural roots. At the same time they looked towards plainchant and the Medieval and Renaissance vocal repertories, both sacred and secular. Many of these aims reflect the traditions of the Schola Cantorum which, from its beginnings, had promoted the study not only of the early contrapuntal masters but also of folk music. In the *Cours de composition* even d'Indy, renowned for his rigid academicism, had argued that musical form should be a consequence of musical material, rather than a superimposed scheme.