

THE SOUND OF LIGHT

Mompou & Gaudí

A PROPOSAL OF ADOLF PLA AND MARC LLIMARGAS

EL SO DE LA LLUM

Mompou i Gaudí

UNA PROPOSTA D'ADOLF PLA I MARC LLIMARGAS

em&art

THE SOUND OF LIGHT

Mompou & Gaudí

Due to both its contents and the way it has been arranged by artists Adolf Pla and Marc Llimargas, the sound of light, Gaudí and Mompou has been labeled as an extraordinary cultural event of communication.

With the support of Spanish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, it has been in most Latin American countries for five years, and with support of Ramon Llull Institute, it has been in Turkey, Romania and China. In all countries has been very well received and Mexico City, organized by Banamex Foundation (Banco Nacional de México) have reached 150.000 hits. Also It has been presented at The Alltech Forntight Festival of the 2010 World Equestren Games celebreted in Kentucky (USA). Currently being presented at the Museum of Music / Auditorium of Barcelona, where it will remain until mid-2013.

This unique and interdisciplinary artistic offering, which centers on the figures of Antoni Gaudí (1852-1926) and Frederic Mompou (1893-1987), includes a piano concert with digitally processed images, an exhibition of large scale photographs, and a lecture. You can also include workshops about these two geniuses of catalan and universal art.

The sound of light, Gaudí and Mompou offers you a broad and detailed look at the spiritual, artistic and technical dimensions of Gaudí's architecture and Mompou's music. In a unitary, suggestive and educational fashion, it combines both artistic and reflective expression. The aim is quite simply to draw the general public closer to the essence of this art so that they may better enjoy and understand it.

Ar-

chitecture

creates spaces of silence.

Music is born in silence.

Through the harmonic resonance of *Música callada* and *Charmes*, Mompou invites us to listen to the voice of silence... and we can imagine no more sonorous architecture than that of Gaudí.

We propose this space as a sensitive dialogue of images, sounds and words of these two “masters of the art of the future”.

Adolf Pla and Marc Llimargas

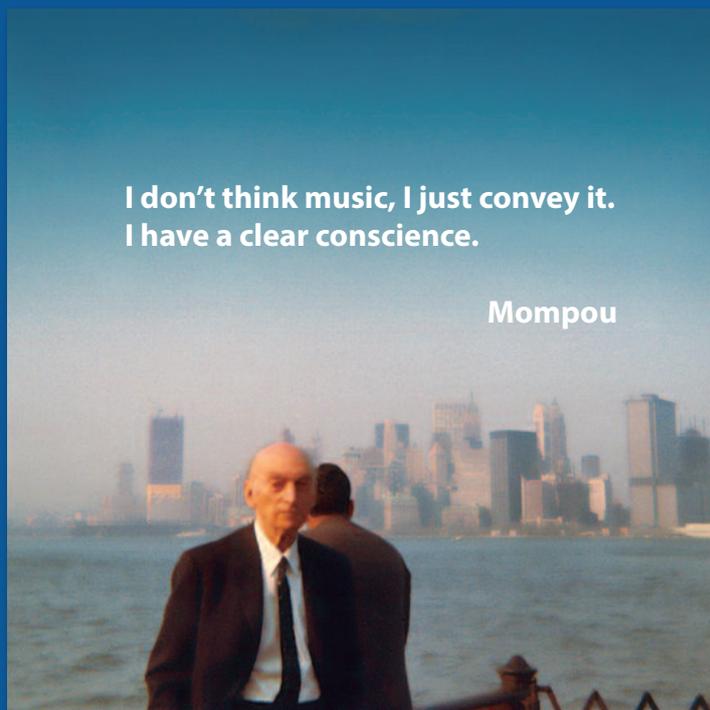
Museu de la Música presents a project of the musician Adolf Pla and the photographer Marc Llimargas in connection with two great figures of Catalan art: the musician and composer Frederic Mompou and the architect Antoni Gaudí.

Jointly, two contemporary creators contemplate the past. Pla has studied and interpreted Mompou's work, whereas Llimargas has reflexively photographed the works of Gaudí. The meeting of Pla and Llimargas gives rise to a dialogue on the creative elements shared by Mompou and Gaudí.

Frederic Mompou (1893-1987) belonged to the generation of musicians of the early decades of the 20th century and lived in the difficult years of the war and post-war period. Gaudí (1852-1926) lived during the *Renaixença* (the Catalan Rebirth period) and he is the foremost exponent of the Catalan architectural *Modernisme*, having worked in the closing decades of the 19th century and the opening decades of the 20th. Despite their having belonged to different generations and cultural contexts, and although they devoted themselves to different artistic disciplines, they shared the city of Barcelona and the Mediterranean light. Pla and Llimargas, through an artistic rather than a discursive proposal, show us the surprising links they have discovered between the two great creators, in both their conception of art and in their sources of inspiration.

Mompou forms the guiding thread of the exhibition. Through his personal documents, provided by courtesy of the Frederic Mompou Foundation, with some materials never before displayed, the Museum presents a preliminary biographical space shedding light on the musician's personality and work. From that point on, images, musical scores, graphisms and aphorisms invite visitors to take a suggestive look at Mompou's and Gaudí's aesthetic worlds.

Music Museum of Barcelona



Mompou in New York, 1973

Interactive

Mompou defines his music [2 min 16 s]
Programme *Personatges*, 1978. Interview by Montserrat Roig

Mompou: the first composition [2 min 6 s]
Programme *A fondo*, 1976. Interview by Joaquín Soler Serrano

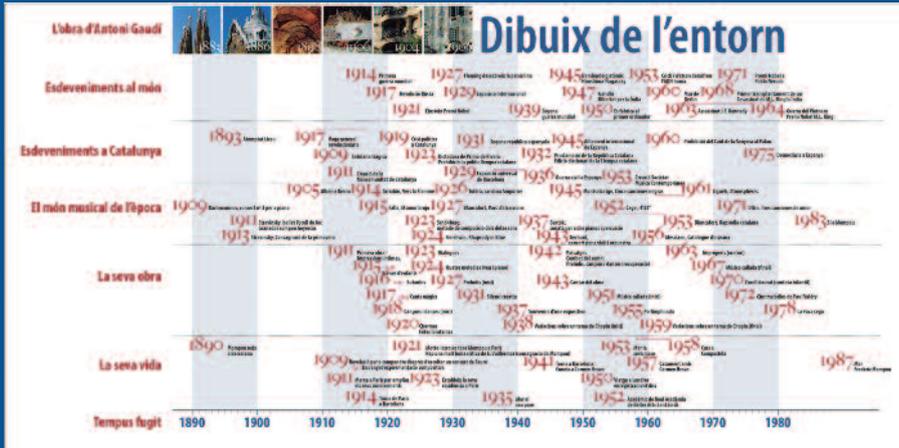
Jankélévitch talks about Mompou [1 min 44 s]
Grandes músicos. Dir. Agustín Navarro, 1979

Mompou: *Cançó núm. 1* [2 min 54 s]
L'home et sa musique. Dir. Jacques Trébouta, 1970

Victòria dels Àngels and Mompou: *Damunt de tu només les flors* [4 min 39 s]
L'home et sa musique. Dir. Jacques Trébouta, 1970



Photographic collage



Timeline

A boundless open-mindedness

Frederic Mompou had an introverted and reflexive personality and perceived his world with great intensity. From a very early age he showed an interest in the great questions of philosophy and was very open-minded, becoming fascinated by the thought of the Oriental cultures.

Mompou's music originated before it came to manifest itself in thought. In this sense, it may be qualified as "original", the fruit of a conscious flowing.

A BOUNDLESS OPEN-MINDEDNESS

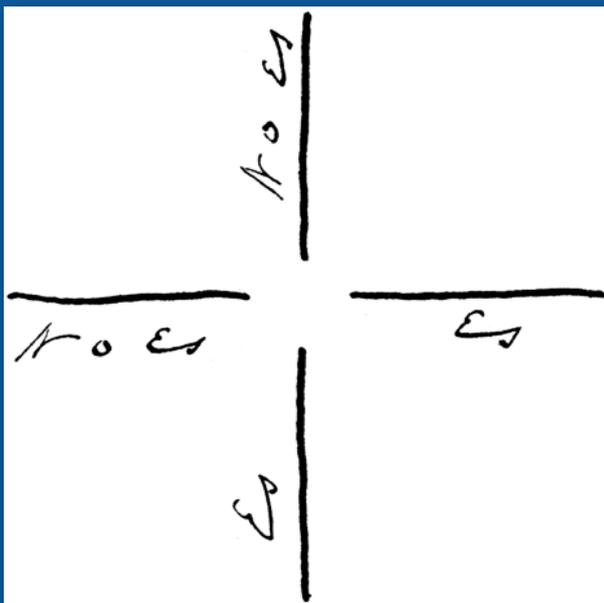
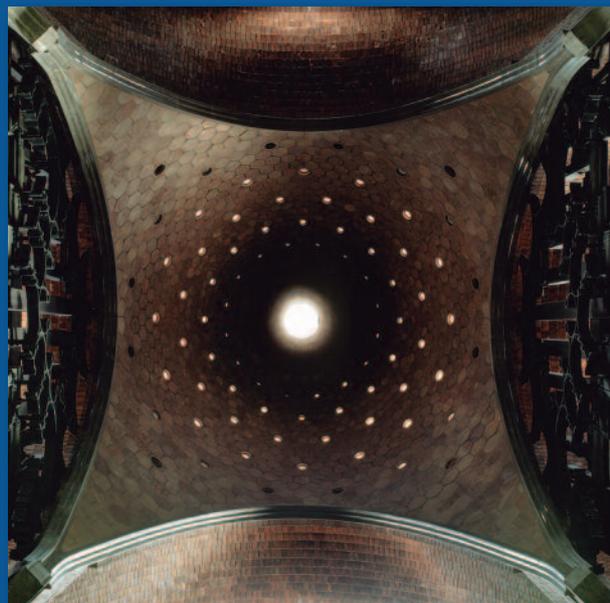


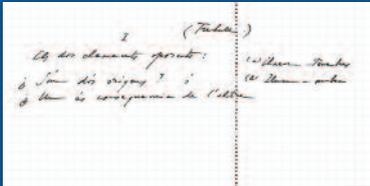
Diagram drawn by Mompou (ca. 1919)



Dome of the Palau Güell, 1885-1900

a boundless open-mindedness

A BOUNDLESS OPEN-MINDEDNESS

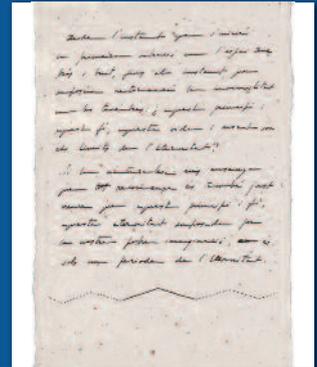


Notebook of thoughts (ca. 1919)

Opposites

Are the two opposite elements:
 a) brightness-darkness
 b) light-shadow
 two origins...?
 Or is one the consequence of the other?

Mompou



Notebook of thoughts (ca. 1919)

Eternity

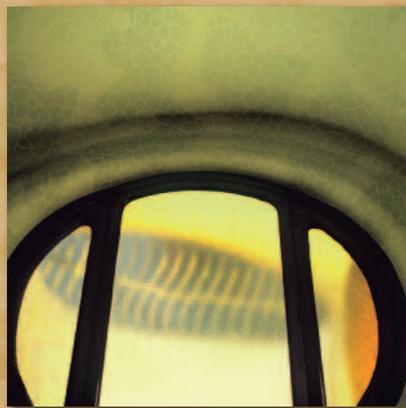
From the moment the first vibration began in dark empty space, until the moment we assume that immobility will return to the darkness: are this beginning and this end, this life and death the limits of eternity?
 If nature teaches us that everything rebegins, it may also be believed that this beginning and end, this eternity assumed by our poor imagination, is only a period of eternity.

Mompou

A BOUNDLESS OPEN-MINDEDNESS



Casa Milà, 1906-1912



Casa Batlló, 1904-1906



Park Güell, 1900-1914

Intelligence will always be immersed in the doubt between two opposite truths.

Mompou

There are two types of happiness: joy and sadness, although few people understand the latter.

Mompou

A BOUNDLESS OPEN-MINDEDNESS



Barcelona, coastline industry (1918)



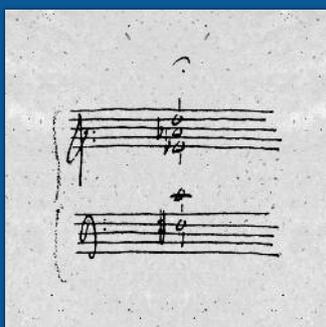
Manuscript of Mompou (1910)

Metallic chord

The metallic chord is when something transcendental occurs in me, the instant in which it appears from my fingers: this chord, obstinately repeated, revealed to me a world of sound within a metallic atmosphere. An atmosphere like the one that enveloped my entire childhood, tied to the bell foundry and later to the industrial areas that I saw and felt on my walks in Barcelona's surroundings and especially in the coastline areas.

Mompou

A BOUNDLESS OPEN-MINDEDNESS



Manuscript (1910)

What is Mompou's metallic chord?

It is a symbol of the union of opposites: consonance with dissonance and symmetry with asymmetry. This union brings us to a very subtle vibratory space that transports us to a different state of consciousness and fluidity.

The magical attracts us by its connection between reality and irreality. In this way, this chord formed by sound vibrations in opposites conveys to us the experience of feeling magic.

All my music lies in this chord.

Mompou

A BOUNDLESS OPEN-MINDEDNESS

Consonances
opposed
by the
tritone

Consonances
opposed
to
dissonances

Opposite
dissonances
of tone
and half tone

Asymmetry
8
5 semitones
3

Asymmetry
6
semitones

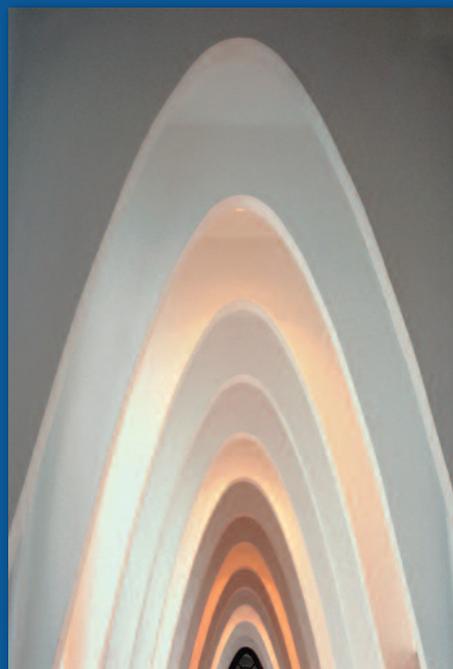
The diagram illustrates musical intervals and their relationships. It is divided into five sections:

- Consonàncies oposades pel tritò:** Shows two chords separated by a tritone interval.
- Consonàncies oposades a dissonàncies:** Shows two chords where one is a consonance and the other is a dissonance.
- Dissonàncies oposades de i mig tò:** Shows two chords separated by a half-tone interval.
- Assimetria 8 5 semitons 3:** Shows a sequence of intervals: 8 semitones, 5 semitones, and 3 semitones.
- Simetria 6 semitons:** Shows a sequence of intervals: 6 semitones.

A BOUNDLESS OPEN-MINDEDNESS



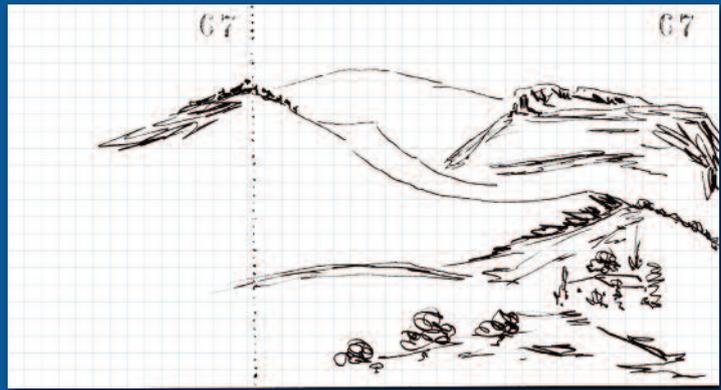
Mompou and his goddaughter, Elisenda Janés (1955)



Teresian School (1885-1899)

the beauty of matter

THE BEAUTY OF MATTER
IN A COMPOSITION THAT ISN'T ONE



Drawing by Mompou (ca. 1919)

Rebeginning

I feel the music of the little path in the mountains. I make this music because art has reached its limit... Art is a return to the primitive. No, it is not a return... it is a rebeginning. It is a rebeginning with all that we have come to know.

Mompou

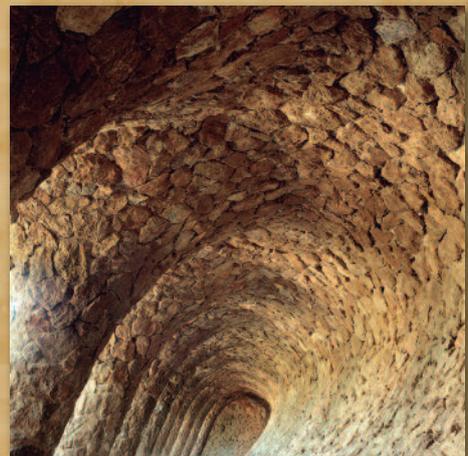
**When I smell a flower
I don't think about how it was cultivated.
That's how I like to listen to my music.**

Mompou

THE BEAUTY OF MATTER
IN A COMPOSITION THAT ISN'T ONE



Casa Batlló, 1904-1906



Park Güell, 1900-1914

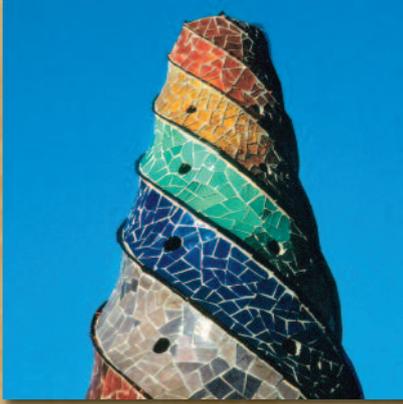
Originality consists of returning to the origin.

Gaudí

Apparent primitivism. The new starting point is ideal and it is situated in our times. Our cave faces the future with clean walls.

Mompou

THE BEAUTY OF MATTER
IN A COMPOSITION THAT ISN'T ONE



Palau Güell, 1886-1890



Park Güell, 1900-1914

The sun is the great painter of the Mediterranean lands.

Gaudí

The beauty of matter
in a composition
that isn't one

One day in Paris, Mompou received the visit of the musicologist José Bruyr. On opening the door, when the visitor asked him if he was the *composer* Mompou, Frederic answered: "Je ne suis pas un compositeur! Je ne suis qu'une 'musique' et une musique la moins composée du monde". ("I am not a composer! I am just a 'music' and indeed the least composed music in the world".)

Mompou identified himself as a musician – the person who intuits or receives music – in contrast to a *composer* – the person who builds and is capable of erecting an imposing symphony with a handful of notes.

THE BEAUTY OF MATTER
IN A COMPOSITION THAT ISN'T ONE

LIGHT



Mediterranean olive tree

MEDITERRANEAN



Tarragona sea

The great book that is always open and that we must strive to read is that of Nature.

Gaudí

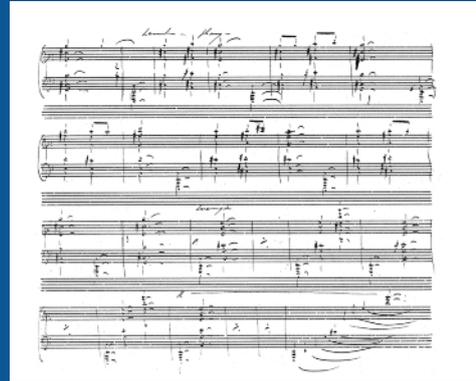
THE BEAUTY OF MATTER
IN A COMPOSITION THAT ISN'T ONE

SILENCE



Aglaia, Enric Monjo, 1950.
Aglaia is the symbol of intuition and creativity.

RESONANCE



Cants màgics, 1919

Thought works only in silence.

Mompou

THE BEAUTY OF MATTER
IN A COMPOSITION THAT ISN'T ONE

Interactive

Matter [2 min 11 s]

El carrer, el guitarrista i el vell cavall / El llac

Silence [57 s]

Música callada X

Resonance [1 min 5 s]

Cants màgics

Light and Mediterranean [1 min 30 s]

Scènes d'enfants

Melody and tradition [2 min 9 s]

Cançó III, El noi de la mare

Metallic chord [2 min 11 s]



Graphism of Mompou (ca.1919)

Translating the past

Mompou's capacity of dematerialising music causes it to reach us, magically, with all its substance. When he uses a folk melody, he expresses its essence, an essence that keeps flowing in all his music. Mompou also brings in tradition, drawing close to medieval music in order to reach the primaevial sounds, just as Gaudí turns to Gothic, Byzantine and Greek architecture to recognise the architecture of nature.

Each man,
with his pride,
is the centre of his homeland.

Mompou

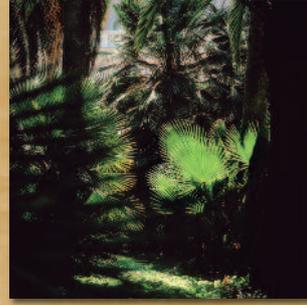
THE BEAUTY OF MATTER
IN A COMPOSITION THAT ISN'T ONE



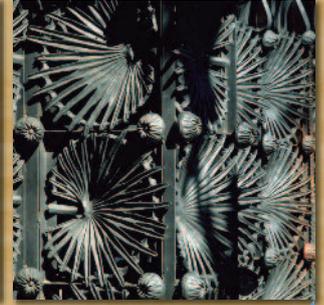
St. George, *Enric Monjo*, 1955
Terrassa cathedral.
The model is *Mompou*.



Casa Batlló, 1904-1906



Fan palm



Casa Vicens, 1883-1888

**Tradition governs us,
guides us and leads us.**

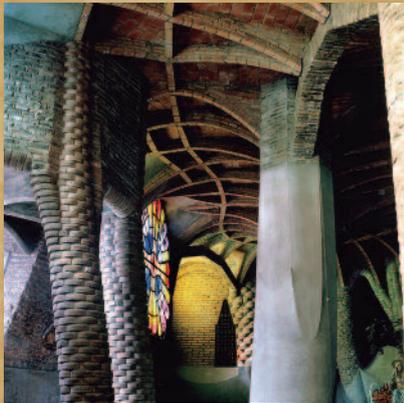
Gaudí

We have to be synthetic.

Gaudí

MASTERS OF THE FUTURE

masters of the future



Colonia Güell crypt, 1908-1915



Sagrada Família church, 1883

**The realisation of a thing consists
of making its law accord
with the law of Creation.**

Gaudí

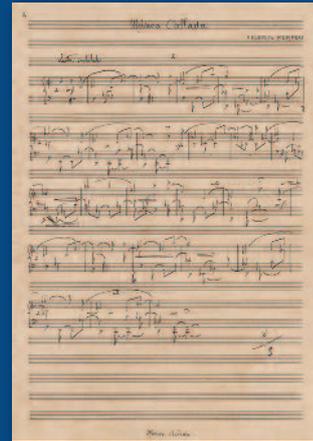
**The artist is a magnificent servant of art.
He is just a humble intermediary
between the Creator and the work.**

Mompou

MASTERS OF THE FUTURE



Spires of the Sagrada Família's bell towers



Música callada X, 1962

**The tranquil night
at the approaches of the dawn,
the silent music,
the sonorous solitude,
the supper which revives and
enkindles love.**

Saint John of the Cross

MASTERS OF THE FUTURE



*Nativity façade bell tower
of the Sagrada Família church*

The world's biggest musical instrument

Gaudí conceived the Sagrada Família church as a musical instrument... as an immense instrument with 12 bell towers containing 7 tubular bells each, for a total of 84 bells, like an enormous piano keyboard, so that the church's voice would be heard throughout Barcelona.

Masters of the future

Architecture creates silences.

Music is born in silence.

Few silences are as sonorous as Gaudí's. No music is exactly the selfsame voice of silence. Or perhaps only Mompou's music is.

masters of the future

Wisdom
is greater
than science.

Gaudí



Music is the repose
of the seventh day
of Creation.

Mompou

F. Mompou

Ant. Gaudí



MOMPOU BIOGRAPHY

Frederic Mompou i Dencausse was born on 16 April 1893 in Barcelona's Paral·lel district. Although possessing the talent required to become a pianist, in 1909 he turned his attention to composition, fascinated by a concert of Gabriel Fauré and Marguerite Long in Barcelona. Over the course of two years, he worked out the foundation of his music in a harmonic sonority: the metallic chord.

In 1911 he finished his first piece, *Impressions íntimes*, and took up residence in Paris until 1914. With the outbreak of World War I, he returned to Barcelona, where he remained until 1921, composing there a large part of his most emblematic works: *Cants màgics*, *Charmes*, *Fêtes lointaines*. . . In 1921 he went back to Paris to show this music to his piano teacher, Ferdinand Motte-Lacroix, who premiered it to warm praise from the critic Émile Vuillermoz.

Mompou was especially creative in the 1920s, composing his first *Cançons i danses*, *Preludis* and songs for voice and piano. In the 1930s he suffered a severe creative crisis, producing very few compositions. He returned to Barcelona under the circumstances stemming from the war in 1941 and stayed there the rest of his life. In that same year he met Carmen Bravo, who would become his wife seventeen years later.

In this period he started off on new paths of composition that were increasingly serene and austere. By 1951 he had completed the first book of *Música callada*, his masterpiece, and in 1967 he finished the last of the four books. In 1957 he completed his most virtuosic work, *Variacions sobre un tema de Chopin*, and in 1963 he composed his only symphonic-choral work, *Improperios*. In 1978 he composed his last piece, *La vaca cega*, a song with a text by the great poet Joan Maragall. Frederic Mompou died on 30 June 1987.