

## The German – Spanish Sound

Around the middle of the 19th century, the development of the "Spanish guitar" has found its final form, which is still valid today. The instruments of the Andalusian Antonio de Torres Jurado (1817 - 1892) and - almost 20 years later - of his South Castilian colleague Vicente Árias Castellanos (1833 - 1914) were trend-setting for guitar making in central and north-eastern Spain, which was flourishing at the turn of the century: Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia. While on the Levant coast, simpler instruments already had been produced in series, in Madrid and Barcelona, on the other hand, manufactories were formed with a focus on high-quality individual pieces. In the Castilian metropolis, these were especially the workshops of the brothers José I (1858 - 1923) and Manuel Ramírez (1864 - 1916). In the Catalan capital, Enrique García Castillo (1868 - 1922) and his successors Francisco (1874 - 1932) and Miguel Simplicio (1899 - 1938) produced masterpieces of guitar making. At that time, high-quality flamenco guitars (mostly with back and sides made of local cypress wood) were also constructed in Madrid, in addition to the classical concert instruments, for which expensive imported woods such as rosewood and sometimes maple were mostly used. Barcelona - not a flamenco area - concentrated on the construction of classical guitars. Here, mainly exotic, expensive woods were used, such as Rio rosewood, satinwood, or exclusive mahogany species. Rich decorations (ornamental inlays in rims and rosettes, ornately carved headstocks, etc.) were also significant details of this Art Nouveau-influenced era. And the instruments from the two cities then, at the beginning of the 20th century, began their global triumphal march from there - to the rest of the Old World and the entire New World.

Of course, the instruments needed their ambassadors, and these were the "travelling Spanish virtuosos" who enthralled the public with their fascinating playing. It is not possible to list all the names here - therefore only the most important ones should be mentioned. First and foremost is Francisco Tárrega Eixea (1852 - 1909), the dominating representative of the "classical guitar" at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. FT preferred to play guitars by Antonio de Torres, of which he owned three (1864 / First Epoch/ Maple - 1883 / SE 49 / Maple - 1888 / SE 114 / rosewood), but in his last years he often used an instrument built by Enrique Garcia in 1904. In several photos, he can also be seen with a guitar by Vicente Árias, from whom he had purchased an instrument in 1878. His concert tours took him to France, Italy, England and North Africa. And his numerous virtuoso compositions and arrangements are standard guitarist repertoire today!



In the succession of this gifted musician, 3 outstanding players shaped the new century, 2 of whom can be called his pupils: Miguel Llobet (1878 - 1938) and Emilio Pujol (1886 - 1980). The third is Andrés Segovia (1893 - 1987). He had nothing directly to do with Tárrega, described himself primarily as self-taught, but was well acquainted with Llobet and Pujol. He was later to become the most important guitarist of the 20th century. Like their master, ML and EP preferred Torres guitars. Llobet's favourite was a rosewood / "Tornavoz" instrument from 1859, while Pujol used a guitar of the same type from 1863. The young Andrés Segovia performed with a guitar built by Santos Hernández in the Madrid workshop of Manuel Ramírez for the next quarter century, starting in 1912. This instrument will have a special significance later on in these lines.

Miguel Llobet gave concerts in Central Europe and both Americas, Emilio Pujol toured Central Europe and South America - and. Andrés Segovia toured tirelessly, even into old age, around the world!

On their tours northwards, all three guitarists also visited Germany and left lasting impressions with their "modern" instruments. The first of these was Miguel Llobet, who gave concerts in Munich on 10 November 1913 and in the first days of March 1914. Probably due to the First World War (1914 - 1918), he did not return to Germany until 1920 and 1921. In Munich, he performed together with Andrés Segovia in 1924. The latter gives concerts in Berlin at the end of 1926. In the same year, Emilio Pujol also played there, as well as in Dresden, Munich and Augsburg.

The Spanish guitars naturally attracted the attention of the local instrument makers, whose work followed completely different principles. Here, the influences of the Austrian masters (Stauffer, Scherzer, Schenk) and the Italian Guadagnini dynasty were dominant. Also, the instruments were used less for classical music at that time, but rather for song accompaniment. Two important "guitarreros", one in Baria, the other in Saxony, were to represent more and more the top of German guitar making: Hermann Hauser (1882 - 1952) in Munich and Richard Jacob "Weissgerber" (1877 - 1960) in Markneukirchen. The works of these two masters will be the subject of the following!

Let's take a look back at the years 1913 and 1914. Hermann Hauser, a luthier from Munich, experienced Miguel Llobet's playing and was impressed. This led him to build what he considered



an unusual guitar between November 1913 and March 1914. We will now take a closer look at this instrument.

- 1) Three-piece back (rosewood - curly maple with decorative stripes - rosewood).  
The two outer parts "saw veneer", as used by HH for zither making, as well as the rosewood ribs.
- 2) Spruce top, already covered by the "Hauser patent", although this was applied for and years later (1920)
- 3) Spanish bridge with wings in the form of a roof construction, unique in Hauser guitars to this day.
- 4) The plantilla is very similar to Llobet's "Torres 1859".
- 5) The scale length, just under 65 cm, also points to this instrument.
- 6) The luxurious tuners with a "quick tuner" on the first string are also striking.

On the occasion of the Munich concert, Hermann Hauser presented the Spanish virtuoso with one of his traditional maple guitars as a gift. This instrument is still in the Hauser collection today (after various modifications).

It is obvious, however, that the German guitar maker was very impressed by the "Torres". But why did Hermann Hauser only build one instrument of that type? Several reasons could have been responsible:

- 1) Rio rosewood was unusual in German guitar making and not easy to obtain in the required in the required sizes - and correspondingly expensive.
- 2) There was no respectable "fan community" for the classical guitar at that time.
- 3) Hauser had to respect the wishes of the customers for his traditional, well-known maple guitars in order to earn money.
- 4) Spanish-style instruments would have meant more work and much higher costs for the clients.
- 5) And then there was, as the greatest evil, the first catastrophe of the 20th century, the world war that lasted from 1914 to 1918!

Ten years later, after the triumphant success of the concert tour by Miguel Llobet and Andrés Segovia, the guitaristic scene in Germany had totally changed. The new "Spanish guitar" had



become popular. And Hermann Hauser decided to devote himself intensively to the construction of this type of instrument. It was then that he laid the foundation for his later worldwide fame.

It is now time to turn to a second important German guitar maker, the master craftsman Richard Jacob "Weissgerber" from Markneukirchen in Saxony.

Note:

The biographies of both "guitarreros" are deliberately not considered here; rather, the aim is to illuminate their development as instrument makers on the basis of chronological sequences. The only thing that seems important in this context is that both people were the outstanding representatives of their guild in this country.

Miguel Llobet had already given numerous concerts in Germany in 1920 / 21 and had also visited Markneukirchen. Richard Jacob must have been among the audience at that time, because as early as 1922 he began to build Spanish-inspired guitars for the first time, which he called the "Small Spanish Model". In their design, they resembled the model much more than the "Hauser 1914" opus. After the 1924 Llobet/Segovia concert, Jacob decided to devote himself intensively and primarily to the construction of these instruments. From 1926 onwards, he put this into practice.

Hermann Hauser began to build such guitars immediately after the tour of the two virtuosos in 1924. The interest among his customers for the outstanding quality of the precious instruments from Seville and Madrid was the impetus for him to deal with their special constructional features. It seems that Segovia's instrument, the "Manuel Ramírez 1912", served him primarily as a model. That was understandable, because this guitar allowed him to look inside - in contrast to Llobet's "Torres 1859" with "Tornavoz". Even the 1924 Hauser guitars corresponded in plantilla and head design to the model from Madrid. HH kept this silhouette until the beginning of the 1930s, although he sometimes used the "three arches" head of Torres, which were to become the "trademark of the Hauser" from the mid-1930s to today. The tops received the typical fan-shaped bracing in 1925, but were very thick (3.5 to 4 mm) compared to the "Spaniards".



Guitars of this era are today called "thick top - Hauser". The Luthier must have realised very quickly that the future could lie for him in the collaboration with Segovia, and therefore in the years that followed he constantly offered the young virtuoso, who was becoming more and more famous, new guitars that were also becoming more and more popular worldwide.

In 1929 Segovia already played concerts in the United States with a Hauser 1929. The collaboration finally culminated in the construction of the famous Hauser 1937, which Segovia called "the greatest guitar of our epoch", and for him the reason "to give my noble Ramirez a rest". The guitar, like the Ramirez before, was to become the Andalusian's constant partner for a quarter of a century and, like him, achieved worldwide fame.

Hauser instinctively did the right thing in the mid-1920s. In permanent contact with the up-and-coming, brilliant player, he chose the best way for his guitars to "become known". The connection to Segovia remained until the luthier's death in 1952 - the virtuoso, who was threatened by temporary blindness, carried a last Hauser guitar from 1952 with him to play at his sickbed! The contact to the Hauser family, with the successors

(Hermann Hauser II and Hermann Hauser III) has been maintained by Segovia. In 1946 HH moved his workshop from Munich to Reisbach / Vils, where HH III still continues the guitar making tradition together with his daughter Kathrin.

Richard Jacob "Weissgerber" actually spent his entire working life in his home town. He was an extremely hard-working craftsman who was completely absorbed in his profession. He probably created well over 3000 instruments during his lifetime, and his number of models, made from a wide variety of different woods, and in the most subtle decorations, is unrivalled to date. His working days often lasted from 7.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m., and often included parts of Sunday! As he built "in stock", already thinking of his future successor, his second son Arnold (1917 - 1944), his "guitar stock" was incredibly extensive. Tragically, the highly talented young instrument maker died in a military hospital at the age of only 27, which was a terrible blow for his father - after all, he had placed all his hopes on this son!

The first-born, Martin (1911 - 1991), actually studied to be a teacher, was no longer allowed to practise his profession after 1945, and now joined his father, as he had been familiar with guitar making since childhood. Martin Jacob had a hard, over-critical master in Richard and had to work out a lot of things on his own, until the older man gave him fatherly praise towards the end of his life. Until his death in 1991, Martin Jacob continued the family tradition, completing his father's "stock guitars" and making a small number of highly refined instruments himself.



After their first acquaintance with the new type of guitar (HH 1913/14, RJW 1922), both masters devoted themselves to the construction of such instruments from the mid-1920s onwards. How did their work develop as a result, and where did it ultimately lead? It is, after all, "the sound that makes the music", and this leads in Munich and Reisbach, as well as in Markneukirchen, in quite different ways, to completely independent results. This is what we are going to talk about now.

#### Hermann Hauser

As already mentioned, the instruments of the Munich guitar maker were strongly influenced by the Austrian, "alpine" school, solidly built, mostly with back and sides made of local maple, and a very percussive, dark - muffled tone - less intended as a soloist's guitar, but more for use in song accompaniment. The first examples of the new style, 1924/25, in Spanish silhouette and with fan bracing, were somewhat reminiscent of the sound of the Stauffer guitars, or also the masterpieces of the Frenchman René Francois Lacôte. The spirit of the early 19th century was still clearly perceptible here. In the course of the following years, however, Hauser's works became more and more special, more elegant. He departs from the "thick tops", approaches more and more the Spanish models, but still remains in the range of 2.5 to 3 millimetres. In addition to the traditional Torres fan bracing, he introduces the later so-called "Hauser - lining" underneath the bridge into his constructions.

#### The Hauser sound.....

With the rosewood and the more filigree construction the dark "German" sound changes more and more in the direction of the Iberian models. The "cool" sound gives way to the powerful, richly coloured sound of the Spanish - but without being completely lost! The "old sound", short, direct and concise, wonderfully suited to the music of the Renaissance and Baroque, remains in its purest form a component of Hauser instruments from the mid-1930s onwards. And with this element, the



"guitarrero" HH brought something into guitar making that was not so present in the Spanish instruments. His guitars became "universal", wonderfully suited to all kinds of music, from the works of the "vihuelistas" to contemporary composers! "Southern warmth with a touch of Nordic coolness" - you may forgive this almost rapturous interpretation! But the harmony of power, glow and silkiness simply seduces. Dark timpani becomes ,little by little, springy drum! Was it perhaps this that Segovia liked so much about the 1937 Hauser, and, after him, the great musician-guitarist Julian Bream, who was always a great Hauser fan?

It is conceivable!

Hauser has, basically, always remained true to his two models Torres and M. Ramirez, but has created a further development through minimal, sometimes barely visible changes. One example may be given here. By pressing a thin strip of spruce underneath the fingerboard between the body and the sound hole, he improved the glueability and was thus able to successfully counteract the frequently occurring cracks in the top next to the ebony! This constant reflection on his own work must also be seen as part of the success of Hauser guitars. The location in the cosmopolitan city of Munich, where many international, aspiring young artists, including guitarists, came at that time, was of course also a reason for the growing popularity of Hauser instruments.

Then, in 1939, the Second World War began .....

Richard Jacob "Weissgerber" turned to the new, "Spanish" style at the same time as HH. The artistic element, a certain tendency towards "modernism", always played a role in his work. It also gives the impression that he hardly ever made "simple" guitars throughout his entire career, regardless of whether it was a question of design or the choice of materials. So it is not surprising that his Spanish instruments show a lot of independence in their construction. He experiments with different woods, alternating bracing and different thicknesses of tops and backs. What all his works have in common is a tendency towards lightness, without, however, disregarding the static necessities. This is expressed particularly strongly in his late work of the 1950s/1960s. Here, although the form remains the same, the overall construction takes a different, new direction. In his model catalogue of 1935, Richard Jacob calls the Torres guitar "indisputably the most perfect". It was his main inspiration during the years between the two World Wars.



However, the geographical location of Markneukirchen proved to be a certain drawback for the Saxon master. His hometown could not offer the lively, international cultural exchange as Munich. This made it difficult for him to maintain constant contact with travelling guitar virtuosos. The instruments of his Munich colleague, on the other hand, had already achieved a certain international fame, while the "Weissgerber" guitars spread more in the German-Austrian area.

Then, in 1939, the Second World War began.....

A small insertion is necessary here!

Both guitar makers were influenced by another direction. These were the instruments of the Catalan Francisco Simplicio (1874 - 1932), who was a pupil and successor of the famous Ramirez collaborator Enrique Garcia (1868 - 1922). These guitars, often equipped with a tornavoz, were characterised by a deep dark, melancholy tone. Hauser was able to acquire a Tornavoz-Torres from 1860 as well as one by Simplicio. He used them to compare with his own work. Jacob came into contact with Simplicio guitars, presumably through the Berlin guitarist and import dealer Erwin Schwarz-Reiflingen. He adopted the carved "Spanish crown" as a decorative detail from the Barcelona instruments and named his most luxurious instrument "Simplicio" in his above-mentioned catalogue.

Hermann Hauser's workshop fell victim to the bombing of Munich. There were only very few instruments from the 1940s war years; in 1944 / 45 nothing was made at all. In 1946, the Hausers emigrated to Reisbach / Vils in Lower Bavaria, where the workshop is still located today. From 1947 guitars were made again. Hermann Hauser II, the son, returned from captivity with severe war injuries and urgently needed convalescence.

And the senior only had a few more creative years left - his life ended in 1952.



Richard Jacob's loss was immaterial. The early death of his son Arnold, who was to be his successor and towards whom all his work was directed, had hit him infinitely hard. It was only with unbelievable energy that he managed to concentrate all his energies once again in the following years and to reach the peak of his art in the last period of his life between 1955 and 1960, when he was in some cases over 80 years old.

His elder son, Martin, managed his father's legacy, completed many of his guitars, and himself constructed a small amount of high quality guitars. He ran the workshop until his death in 1991.

The Weissgerber sound.....

Siegfried Behrend, the most important, and internationally renowned German guitarist of the second half of the 20th century, always performed with "Weissgerber" instruments on his worldwide tours, and owned more than 30 of these masterpieces. He called this sound "unique", and indeed, to this day, no guitars comparable in sound to RJW's late work can be found internationally.

But what is this special feature all about?

Like HH's, Jacob's instruments were also influenced by the sound of the "Viennese School" before the "Spanish contact". Then, however, both masters went different ways.

While Hauser added a pinch of "German tone" to the Spanish timbre, RJW began to find his own sound. The sound was "purified", as if it were freed from all dullness without losing the basic character. The result was sparkling, like drops of water falling on a sheet of metal. Modulative, powerful, like the Spaniards - but completely unique in colour. One is reminded of Gregorian chorales or high, majestic cathedral halls. RJW created this sound with the "Great Concert Solo" instruments in the last years of his life - unique to this day!

The period of reconstruction after 1945.....

The Second World War had brought endless suffering and destruction through and in Germany. All of this ultimately led to the division of the country into two different state systems which were



shielded from each other and for which contact with each other was first made very difficult and later completely impossible by force. When the worldwide triumphal march of the classical and flamenco guitar began in the western hemisphere in the 1960s, the "Federal Republic of Germany" was able to participate intensively. The "German Democratic Republic", however, was completely cut off from it by the "Iron Curtain". While the guitars of Hermann Hauser I, and then also of his son, Hermann Hauser II, achieved worldwide fame thanks to the concerts of Segovia and his followers, the masterpieces of Richard Jacobs were reserved for local guitarists. Only Siegfried Behrend made these guitars known worldwide, so that in Japan, for example, Weissgerber instruments enjoyed particular popularity. Martin Jacob, who looked after his father's "instrument store" and completed many guitars, was not allowed to sell anything independently to western countries. He had to hand over the work to a state institution, which then regulated the export to only a few authorised dealers in the West. In the FRG, for example, these were the companies Grumbach in Essen, Barth in Stuttgart and Schmidt in Frankfurt/Main. All this happened only "drop by drop", which meant that Weissgerber instruments were almost impossible to obtain and therefore had a high rarity value. In the GDR, however, a generation of young talents had emerged who were able to perform sporadically in the West and celebrate successes with their Weissgerber guitars. The most important competition for classical guitar in the world at that time was the "Concours" of "Radio France" in Paris. It was won twice by young guitarists who had studied in the East, namely in 1964 by Barbara Polasek - Probst (1939 - 2019), and in 1972 by Monika Rost (born 1943). Their instruments were guitars from the late 1950s, the greatest creative period of Richard Jacob, who had given them the name "Great Concert Solo". One of these was also Siegfried Behrend's preferred instrument.

When the new "Federal Republic of Germany" came into being with the fall of the inner-German border in 1989, countless Weissgerber guitars suddenly came into the public eye - and onto the market. And now the unbelievable creative power of the Saxon master could be viewed in all its diversity. Today, many important West German guitarists count Weissgerber guitars among their instruments, and international publications have contributed much to the deserved posthumous fame of Richard, and also his son, Martin Jacob. With the book "WEISSGERBER - Gitarren von / guitars by Richard Jacob", published in 2011, the guitarist and instrument researcher Christof Hanusch has created one of the most meticulous, multi-layered, comprehensive works published to date on the life and work of a guitar maker - the "bible" for anyone who wants to get to grips with Weissgerber.



Back to the roots.....

The Spanish sound and the "West - Eastern Divan"(free after J.W. Goethe) in the shape of the Hausers and Jacob "Weissgerbers"! Both ingenious "guitarreros" have enriched the Iberian sound - each in his own way. The Jacob tradition came to an end with the death of Martin (1991). The Hauser line, with Hermann Hauser III, and his daughter, Kathrin, has successfully ensured the continuation of the tradition, and masterpieces in the traditional style are still being produced in the Reisbach workshop. What remains common, however, is that a Bavarian and a Saxon instrument maker have done pioneering work for the naturalisation and tonal development of the Spanish guitar in Germany. That is why these remarks were written.....

Finally, a small, curious note on my own behalf!

At the beginning of this text, the name Vicente Árias was mentioned. Today he is considered the second important creator of the modern Spanish guitar. As with Hauser / Jacob, the difference between metropolis and province was present in Torres / Árias: Munich / Markneukirchen here, Seville (then Almeria) / Ciudad Real (Madrid much later) there. It is highly unlikely that Richard Jacob has ever seen an Árias guitar, because the public has only recently become aware of this guitar maker and has come to appreciate his work. Nevertheless, some parallels in their work are remarkable:

- both have built instruments of extreme lightness
- both often worked with parallel, four or six fans struts on the tops, without occupying the middle joint
- both used the three arched head without the lateral "Torres steps"
- both often extended the fingerboard on the treble side up to the 19th fret.

Where such similarities came from can hardly be explained today. Coincidence?

"Spiritual transmission"? Or could it be that two brilliant minds had similar thoughts at different times? In any case, it is curious enough to be mentioned!



Karlstein, March 25th, 2023

Siegfried „Hogi“ Hogenmüller



The

"German Spanish Sound"

A small photo gallery,  
to complete

the historical facts  
of the text





# The Beginning

4

the impulse came from two Spanish guitars:

Antonio de Torres

- Sevilla -

- 1859 -

- "Tornavoz" -

- owned by Miguel Llobet -

and

Manuel Ramirez / Antonio Fernandez

- Madrid -

- 1912 -

- owned by Andrés Segovia -

the photos here show:

Antonio de Torres

- Almeria -

- SE 119 - 1888/9 -

- never shown before -

and

Manuel Ramirez

- Madrid -

- 1904 -

- "Tornavoz" -

- very rare -

both in private collections



Antonio de Torres  
- SE 119 - 1888 or 1889 -





Manuel Ramirez - 1904 - Tornavoz -





After Miguel Llobet had played his first two concerts in Munich (late 1913 and early 1914), he inspired

Hermann Hauser I  
to construct one guitar based on the impression of the "Torres 1859":

- Hermann Hauser I - 1914 -

The instrument represents a mixture between Spanish and German Lutherie.

It was a singular example -  
perhaps an experiment!



Hermann Häuser I — 1914 —





In 1921 Miguel Llobet gave a concert in Richard Jacob „Weingerber's“ home town Markneukirchen.

And one year later the guitar maker started with a small „Spanish model“, with a shorter string length.

This model remained in his program and became part of the catalogue published in the 1930es.





Richard Jacob „Weingerber“  
- No 23 6/8. - 1922 -



Kind permission by Christof Lautsch



When in 1924 Miguel Llobet and  
Andrés Segovia played in Germany  
- also visiting Munich and Mordenekirchen -

Hermann Hauser I and Richard Jacob "Leisinger"  
decided to focus their work to guitars  
"in the Spanish style",

and - more and more - developed  
(in different personal directions)  
their own

"German Spanish sound"





Hermann Häuser I - 1926 -





Richard Jacob , Dörmgerber - 1926 -  
- № 27.9. / 7. -





## The Late Masterworks

- Hermann Häuser I - 1947 -
- Richard Jacob "Veingerher" - 1957 -

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These two instruments represent  
HH I (1882 - 1952) and RJ "V" (1877 - 1960)  
at the peak of their career as  
"guitarreros"

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Hermann Häuser I - 1947 -



Hermann Häuser I 1947



Hermann Häuser I 1947

Collection Yoshio Kagashi



Richard Jacob „Weißgerber“  
- № 36.9./5 - 1957 -



Kunstwerkstätte für Gitarren  
„Weißgerber“

**Richard Jacob**

Markneukirchen i. Sa.

Nr. 36.9./5

Gebaut 1957

III/23/3 Kr 1031/56 0,5