



Roberto Etxebarria Goikoetxea (*Gatika*, 1969/08/08)

Musician, composer and teacher.

Genre: traditional music.

Instrument: trikitixa (diatonic accordion)

It all began with a keyboard accordion in 1979, with which he continued for four or five years; in October 1982, he started with the diatonic accordion or trikitixa. At that time, Roberto Etxebarria lived in Maruri-Jatabe, very close to the house of one of the most well-known trikitixa players in Bizkaia: Rufino Arrola. Roberto Etxebarria's parents sent their son to learn with the famous player. He spent a couple of years playing both accordions, the key accordion and the trikitixa.

While studying with Rufino Arrola, he met Eukén Arrola (Rufino's nephew) and Imanol Arrola (nephew of Rufino's brother). In six months, he had the opportunity to play with them in many different celebrations. He played with Eukén Arrola for a long time, because Imanol took a different path, always around the trikitixa. All together, they formed a group with Kepa Arrizabalaga and Eusebio Rueda.

That period was key in Roberto Etxebarria's career: he met the leading trikitixa players of that time in Bizkaia: Fasio, the Etxebarria's from Zollo, Txilibrin, Juanita, Felisa and Eduardo Zornotza, Maurizia Aldeiturriaga.

In 1985 he formed a couple with Txetxu Urrutia, with whom he shared the stage for four or five years. At that time Roberto Etxebarria turned to Kepa Junkera, with whom he spent two years improving his skills and developing a new repertoire. It was a journey from the old Biscayan trikitixa style to the new molds.

In 1987 Roberto Etxebarria competed for the first time in a Trikitixa championship. It took place in Leioa and he presented newly created pieces. He began, therefore, to create and play his own pieces 5 years after having started with the accordion, and he still dedicates himself to this trend today. In that 1987 championship, Txetxu Urrutia accompanied him on the tambourine. On that occasion, the old Biscayan trikitilaris and the young of the new crop appeared together for the last time in a championship. On the stage were, on the one hand, Basilio Undagoitia, Maurizia Aldaiturriaga, Luis Etxebarria and Rufino Arrola, trikitilaris who marked an era of the Biscayan trikitixa; and, on the other hand, Kepa Junkera, Koldo Etxebarria and Roberto Etxebarria, let us say "bridges", between that era and the future. Later came other championships, and one of the characteristics of Roberto Etxebarria has been the fact that he has presented new pieces in numerous championships.

He became teacher in 1988, teaching to friends and acquaintances in the area. He gave trikitixa classes at home. Later he began to teach in other places: in the Cultural Centre of Romo (in Getxo), in the School of Trikitixa of Vitoria-Gasteiz, in Itxartu Dantza Taldea (Getxo), in the School of Music of Mungia and in other schools. Since 2002, he has been teaching in BilbaoMusica, Municipal School of Music in Bilbao.

In 1989 he took part in the Championship of Young Trikitilaris of Zeanuri, in which he also presented his own pieces. He was accompanied by Kepa Arrizabalaga Urrutia (the son). In 1991, EITB organized the I Championship of New Trikitixa Pieces. Roberto Etxebarria presented the piece "Bihotzetik bihotzari" (from the heart to the heart). The melody was composed by him, and the lyrics were by Jon Enbeita. They knew each other from performances in different squares and it was a work done by the bertsolari (oral poet) at the request of the musician. Roberto Etxebarria played live with Kepa Arrizabalaga and they were the winners of the championship, which was a turning point in Roberto's career. In 1992, the couple was once again proclaimed winner in the 2nd edition of the same championship, once again with the melody "Mutil zahar" (Confirmed bachelor) by Jon Enbeita.

The record arrived in 1993. It is a compilation of pieces created by Roberto Etxebarria under the title Bihotzetik bihotzari. He recorded with Kepa Arrizabalaga, and Ainara Arrizabalaga also participated in the recording.

He was also a member of the project Paperetik Plazara ("From the paper to the square") in 1995, a group led by Jon Enbeita that combined verses, couplets and trikitixa. Along with other musicians, both Roberto Etxebarria and Kepa Arrizabalaga performed in that group.

Roberto Etxebarria has preserved the traditional style of the trikitixa and has composed pieces with new airs. In his performances, he has alternated his own pieces with all those he learned in his early days. He has been progressing technically year after year, refining the style, but always keeping the touch of the traditional trikitixa. This is perhaps what defines and makes Roberto Etxebarria's style different and special.

The couple formed by Roberto Etxebarria and Kepa Arrizabalaga performed more than 100 events a year, until Kepa Arrizabalaga retired in 2006. The couple performed both in the Basque Country and abroad. Among the international events in which they have participated, for example, stand out those that took place in the Basque Festivals in the United States (1992, 1996 and 2000) or the tour in Italy in 1993. They are also worthy of mention, among others, the Folk festival of Segovia, the Poborina folk, the Expo of Seville in 1992 or the festivals of Teruel in 2004 and 2007.

After Kepa Arrizabalaga's retirement, Roberto Etxebarria has performed with Idoia Markaida for some years and, later, with his own daughter Miren Etxebarria. Now his daughter regularly accompanies him on the tambourine.

Roberto Etxebarria has played for 38 years in street and square performances. He continues to play more than a hundred times per year in parades, tributes, jacks championships, live performances, collaborations in recordings, festivities or romerías...

Precisely, the projects Erreskan and Lorratz were born in this atmosphere of romerías or festivities. Roberto Etxebarria was the founder and promoter of the formation called Erreskan, a project that wants above all to make room for dance. It focuses on popular music and the aim is to invite the audience to dance. Along the same lines, Lorratz is a group ideal for romerías. Idoia Markaida performs on the tambourine, Ane Etxebarria on the flute and Miren Etxebarria on the violin. This is also a group that plays to get the audience to dance in different styles.

In December 2020, Roberto published the album Hamaikatu kopla... pandero baten konture! (Couplets to the sound of the tambourine). Accompanied by his daughter Miren Etxebarria, the project focuses on traditional couplets. Precisely, the album coincides with his musical career: the traditional couplets have always been a cornerstone for Roberto Etxebarria. Well, the album clearly mirrors his career.