



ZARZUELA AND THE ANTI-MUSICAL
PREJUDICE OF THE SPANISH
ENLIGHTENMENT

Rafael Lamas

Fordham University

During the last third of the eighteenth century, the Madrilenian society, particularly the emerging classes of professionals and civil servants who would constitute the prime theater audience in the following century, began to favor dances and songs of native musical genres such as zarzuela and *tonadilla escénica* over the aristocratic preference for the refined arias of Italian *opera seria*, which dominated the aristocratic stages since the beginning of the 1700s. This is not surprising, as all around Europe a favorable sensitivity toward autochthonous culture was boosting hybrid musical genres that combined elements of popular and high culture. Examples of this include the Italian *opera buffa*, the French *opéra comique*, and the German *Singspiel*. What is notable, however, is that while these European genres led, during the following century, to the creation of a national opera, the Spanish zarzuela did not. Whereas “Spain” is found everywhere in modern opera (from Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* to Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia*; from Beethoven’s *Fidelio* to Verdi’s *Don Carlo* to Bizet’s *Carmen*), Spanish authors did not produce an operatic voice in the same terms as their European colleagues. In the following pages, I argue that what I call “the anti-musical prejudice of the Spanish Enlightenment” played an important role in preventing zarzuela from transforming itself into a European-like genre, and indirectly boosted the differential development of the Spanish musical theater. By exploring the intellectual polemic that surrounded eighteenth-century zarzuela, we can

trace the aesthetic compromises of its particular style. While writers such as Gaspar de Jovellanos, Tomás de Iriarte, and Leandro Fernández de Moratín strongly censured the combination of vernacular music and drama, other authors of the same period such as Ramón de la Cruz engaged in the task of writing popular musical theater. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Spanish academia labeled the former as *ilustrados*, and the latter as traditionalist or *casticistas*. From our standpoint, however, the distinction seems blurry—in fact, both *ilustrados* and *casticistas* were part of the same cultural and intellectual milieu. As I will show, both positions, although apparently incompatible, must be regarded as indispensable factors in the differential development of zarzuela.

During the eighteenth century, the fusion of cultured and profane traditions, and particularly the emergence of hybrid genres of musical theater, transformed the way in which European philosophy related ethics to music. Although a general definition of modern music implies an inevitable reductionism, two moments constitute a turning point from which musicians and European societies changed their relationship with music. The first, the *querelle des bouffons* in France (1752–1754) brought into music similar discussions on the idea of “taste” aroused in literature by the *querelle des antiques et modernes* in the previous century.¹ The second, the birth of the philosophy of aesthetics in Germany during the mid-eighteenth century created a mandate for aesthetic autonomy. Neither the *Encyclopédistes*’ critique of old musical techniques nor the German apology of aesthetic autonomy were intended to oppose music and morals. Neither did they wish to render music a mere object of contemplation. Rather, European philosophers of the late eighteenth century such as Rousseau, Schiller, and Schlegel regarded music and the new musical genres as tools for social education of modern subjectiv-

1. *La querelle des bouffons* began after a performance of Pergolesi’s *opera buffa*, *La serva padrona*, in Paris. In the polemic Jean-Philippe Rameau, as the head of the conservative position who was himself the best heir of seventeenth-century composer Jean-Baptiste Lully, intervened against Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the *Encyclopédistes*, who praised Pergolesi’s innovations. While the aristocratic audience of Versailles preferred the traditional lyric tragedy inherited from the previous century, the new bourgeois audience in Paris favored hybrid genres that introduced comic and popular aspects. In his *Essai sur l’origine des langues*, Rousseau explains the origin of music emphasizing the value of simple melody for expressing direct emotions, and condemns complex harmonies for distorting the communicative power of music. To learn more about *la querelle des bouffons* see Enrico Fubini, and Denise Launay. For more information on *la querelle des antiques et modernes* see Hippolyte Rigault, and Hubert Gillot (pages 576–91 are of particular interest).

ity.² Aesthetic autonomy, in fact, was not a goal in itself, but a postulate to guarantee freedom when producing musical judgments.³ Previously, art was aimed to communicate ethical values whereas in the eighteenth century, it was deemed to define morality. Music was the preferred means of configuring the new subjectivity, since its abstract language favored a relationship in which aesthetic autonomy was safeguarded more than in any other form of art. During the romantic era, listening to music and moreover, creating music, was the ideal way for the subject to become self-conscious. The debates on the ideas of “good taste” in France and Italy, and *Bildung* in Germany, were efforts to define the new relationship between ethics and aesthetics that arose with the emergence of modern subjectivity.⁴ The education of taste would eventually substitute religious or moral education as constructor of the self. As I will address later, modern national opera, as a central educational tool of the subject’s taste, contributed decisively in reorganizing society under the rule of the modern nation.

In what follows, I argue that a similar transformation of musical judgment did not occur in eighteenth-century Spain. Although there were, as in other European countries, a number of hybrid genres that combined cultured and profane traditions, Spanish intellectuals did not generate a notion of musical autonomy or a program of aesthetic education for the modern subject.

2. As Carl Dahlhaus points out in what he calls the emergence of “absolute music,” instrumental music gained preference over vocal music among German philosophers and audience over vocal music during the 1800’s. Instrumental music responded better than opera or other genres of musical theater to idealistic philosophy. Its “absolute” autonomy from conceptual language was seen as a way of better expressing the “idea.” For a study that relates Enlightenment and romantic aesthetics to the German construction of modern subjectivity, see Andrew Bowie.

3. In his essays written between 1785 and 1788, Karl Philipp Moritz explained the new relationship between art and the self, which would become common during the bourgeois era:

The merely useful object is thus not something whole or perfect in itself, but attains that state only in fulfilling its purpose through me, or being completed within me. In observing the beautiful, however, I return the purpose from myself to the object: I observe the object as something not within me, but perfect in itself; that is, it constitutes a whole in itself, and gives me pleasure for the sake of itself, in that I do not so much impart to the beautiful object a relationship to myself, but rather impart to myself a relationship to it. (Dahlhaus 5)

According to Moritz, the assertion of autonomy, rather than detaching ethics from aesthetics, rearranged morality into bourgeois art by articulating a relationship of the self to the object.

4. In Spain the idea of good taste appeared in the second part of the eighteenth century. Italian authors such as Pietro Giannone, or Lodovico Antonio Muratori, whose translated work *Reflexiones sobre el buen gusto en las ciencias y en las artes* was published in Madrid in 1782, were particularly influential.

Rather, authors such as Jovellanos, Iriarte, and Moratín reacted severely against hybrid musical aesthetics. They deemed genres such as zarzuela as a harmful influence on the masses, since they threatened the continuation of basic moral behaviors. I will show that their denial of zarzuela and attempt to control musical change relied on ecclesiastical philosophers such as Feijoo, who demanded the traditional subordination of aesthetics to ethics, and denigrated the music of his own time. To this end, I will analyze the creative opportunities that eighteenth-century zarzuela offered composers and writers. Then, I will address the polemic between Ramón de la Cruz and Leandro Fernández de Moratín. Lastly, I will focus on the musical censorship imposed by the *ilustrados*—with special attention to Benito Jerónimo Feijoo, who set the tone for the anti-musical arguments that would follow—and analyze the conservative musical aesthetics proposed by Tomás de Iriarte.

The Promising Hybridity of Eighteenth-century Zarzuela

Zarzuela was born in the 1650's and was successfully developed in the court of the Hapsburg kings during the following half century. But after the first Bourbon king, Felipe V, was enthroned in 1700, the Italian *opera seria* gradually replaced the Spanish genres of musical theater, and became the preferred musical genre of the state.⁵ By mid-eighteenth century, zarzuela had become a secondary genre with respect to Italian *opera seria*, even though José de Nebra wrote first-class works and the commercial theaters, the Príncipe and De la Cruz, promoted the genre. Zarzuela suffered in great part because its cultural particularity did not reflect the politics of the Bourbon kings. The preferred form, the Italian *opera seria*, was considered a cultured and universal spectacle, synthesizing the absolutist political ideal. In fact, during the reign of Fernando VI, the Court transformed itself into an opera spectacle. That is, operatic performances became luxuriant festivals in which the state invested enormous economic resources, while music and politics blended into a unified project. Only in Spain were singers made statesmen. Most famously, Farinelli was as “el favorito del Rey” both a star on the stage and a political actor in the royal palace corridors. The excessive cost of the per-

5. Juan José Carreras has convincingly refuted the long accepted notion of Italian “*invasión*” over Spanish music, pointing out the fluidity between both musical traditions; see also Rainer Kleinertz.

performances, however, meant that aristocratic musical theater could no longer remain the private indulgence of the aristocracy. Additional funding would have to be found elsewhere. Thus, theaters once reserved for the nobility such as Coliseo del Buen Retiro, or Coliseo de los Caños del Peral (which later would become Teatro Real) had to open their doors to the public to secure a return on their investment. In addition, during the latter part of the century, the State ceased sponsoring performances in the *Reales Sitios*, thereby displacing the musical theater of the elite to the commercial theaters of the capital.

When *opera seria* was popularized, it surrendered somewhat to the aesthetic preferences of the public, who were, after all, financing the performances. The opposite of what the Bourbon king had hoped for happened: rather than the cultured universal and elitist ideal, what began to take root was a form that reflected the blossoming nationalistic feelings of Madrilenian society. After Carlos III became king in 1759, and particularly after the Esquilache riots of 1766, Madrid's audience began to be suspicious of Italian political and cultural influence, thereby increasing the impetus to incorporate elements of the Spanish musical tradition into *opera seria*. The king's dislike of any sort of performing art, as well as the abrupt expulsion of Farinelli to Italy, contributed to the progressive decline of *opera seria* in Spain, although it remained the major musical genre during the entire eighteenth century.⁶ All these circumstances—political, social, and economic—worked together to create the necessary conditions for the ascent of zarzuela in Madrid's theatrical panorama. William Bussey suggests 1768 as the date for the full recovery of zarzuela. He argues that at that time zarzuela became an unequivocal representative of the popular taste. It absorbed the burlesque tradition of *sainete lírico* and *tonadilla escénica* from Baroque comedy, and combined Spanish lyrics, popular songs, and dances, as well as the musical techniques of Italian *opera seria*. Zarzuela became a heterogeneous cultural product capable of pleasing all Madrilenians regardless of their political and social affiliations. In fact, in the last half of the eighteenth century, zarzuela was both “high” and “low” culture, enlightened and popular art, the musical form of the revolutionaries, as well as a bastion of the reactionaries.

6. After more than twenty years in Spain, Farinelli was asked to leave the country in 1759 for opposing the so-called “family pact” between Spain, France, and Naples. To learn more on Farinelli in Spain, see Thomas McGeary.

For European music, modernity consecrated the so-called classical period, a musical style characterized by the rationalization of its elements and the instrumental systematization of the symphonic orchestra. Once the new aesthetic paradigm was established, national opera benefited from the division between “high” and “low” culture, by portraying itself as the most prestigious means of expressing the new political circumstance. It was central in the process of legitimating the national project in Germany, France, and Italy. Rather than persuading the audience with moral allegories as the old aristocratic *opera seria* used to do, national opera instigated its moral program by forging an aura of social prestige and high culture. In this realm of cultural value, national opera portrayed a utopian representation of the bourgeois order, staging a harmonious social body constituted by free individual who shared conventions of taste. By taking advantage of the philosophical notion of aesthetic autonomy, which made the imposed social conventions of taste and freedom a compatible political ideal, national opera reconciled the private and public interests that are highly opposed in modern societies. Nevertheless, the ideal of freedom (as it also appears, for example, in Kant) was reduced to an empty form, displaced from the social sphere to the private one. In a practical sense, the social stratification of taste was, as Bourdieu teaches us, what determined the value of the individual. It became the mechanism to legitimize social differences, which acquire an economic basis in modern times.

In Spain, similarly, late eighteenth-century zarzuela was compelled to clarify its social role by defining its political alliances. The hybrid nature of zarzuela, as I have noted, contributed to its successful recovery, since it allowed the negotiation of its ideological implications with all sectors of society. But hybridity also provoked suspicion, and severe scrutiny. At the turn of the eighteenth century, zarzuela was confronted by *ilustrado* intellectuals, who distrusted the ambiguity of the genre. This crossroad can be reconstructed by examining the dispute about zarzuela between the *castizo* Ramón de la Cruz, Madrid’s most praised *sainetero*, and Leandro Fernández de Moratín, the most eminent representative of *ilustrado* theater. Although the former was initially victorious in this confrontation, the position of the *ilustrado* became the norm for most intellectuals that followed. Zarzuela has since been criticized as a musical genre of “bad taste,” and de la Cruz’s works have disappeared from the regular repertoire. However, as I will show in the following section, although the *ilustrados* engaged in a polemic against zarzuela, their opposition and criticism indirectly helped to shape the genre. They have, indeed, a share in the difference of zarzuela.

The Polemic between Ramón de la Cruz and Leandro Fernández de Moratín

Ramón de la Cruz, in addition to writing about four-hundred *sainetes* and *tonadillas escénicas*, as well as translating and adapting Italian and French operettas, also turned zarzuela into a musical genre that fused elements from different aesthetic, political, and moral sectors of the Madrilenian society of the time. De la Cruz's strategy consisted in reconciling the growing preference for Spanish popular culture, French neoclassical norms, and the techniques of Italian *opera seria*. In a political and moral sense, de la Cruz's zarzuelas blended incipient nationalistic feelings (aroused by the bourgeoisie to oppose the abuses of absolutism), and traditionalist Catholicism (imposed by the ecclesiastical authorities). De la Cruz's mixture of different elements was intended to please a heterogeneous audience and to procure profitable performances. In addition to gratifying the public, de la Cruz also tried to gain the approval of his colleagues, the intellectual elite whose major representatives had the prerogative of judging quality in the arts. *La Briseida* (1768), with music by Rodríguez de Hita, was Ramón de la Cruz's first major attempt to write a zarzuela to satisfy such a diverse audience (Bussey 135–149). It failed, however: on the one hand, the public disliked the excessive neoclassicism, and on the other, the *ilustrado* writers were not convinced of de la Cruz's attempt given the author's *sainetero* past. In *Las labradoras de Murcia* (1769), de la Cruz combined popular and refined elements, integrated the local Murcian dialect with conventions of Italian *opera buffa* (such as textual reiteration), and set the play's burlesque action into a strict neoclassical format. Rodríguez de Hita's musical score mixed Italian influences such as *da capo* arias, melismatic passages, and the Monteverdian *stile concitato*, as well as traditional Spanish elements such as the exclusion of *recitativo* sections, the assignment of a sound to each syllable, and in particular, native musical forms such as Murcia's *jota* (Bussey 101–02). The reaction, however, was again mixed. It was not until *El buen marido* (1770), with music by García Pacheco, that de la Cruz's efforts to combine popular and elite tastes received public recognition.⁷ According to Bussey:

7. Ramón de la Cruz defended himself from the attacks of the *ilustrado* authors. At the end of *El buen marido* he wrote the following:

Si el público, añade, desertara de los coliseos cuando se representan mis obras ó las continuas repulsas de los tribunales que las censuran me reprendiesen, fácilmente quedaría yo desengañado y mudo. Pero, vamos claros: ¿qué concepto pueden merecerme, ni qué respeto han de causarme unos críticos que ponen el mayor cuidado en la ocultación de sus nombres y apellidos, unos

By combining neoclassicism's concerns for verisimilitude and morality with the comic and folkloric, Cruz demonstrated the potential of the zarzuela to entertain and instruct at the same time. Similarly, Pacheco's score continued the union of operatic and popular musical techniques. (162)

The *ilustrado* intellectuals did not praise the effort, however, for they saw de la Cruz's aesthetic compromises as a distortion of neoclassical ideals.⁸ Iriarte, for example, writes:

Que salgan patentes en un papel impreso los defectos de *La Briseida*; que en otro, cuyos principales puntos están probados sin réplica, se manifiesten los disparates de *Las labradoras de Murcia*; que clamen todas las gentes de juicio contra el perjudicial ejemplo de los sainetes que hoy se representan. (Cotarelo y Mori 442–43)⁹

There is a point of irony in such a critique, for Iriarte was himself an intellectual strongly dependent on Baroque ethical and aesthetical principles. De la

ingenios que escriben á escote, unos autores que, reconvenidos, niegan sus obras, y, últimamente, unos críticos que el primer año sólo produjeron un sainete con idea, método y pensamientos que antes había publicado otro . . . (Cotarelo y Mori 86)

8. Moratín's "juicio crítico" of de la Cruz's works (XIV–XV) is another explicit example of the *ilustrado* awareness and rejection of de la Cruz's aesthetic negotiations. On the one hand, Moratín praised the fact that de la Cruz "supo sustituir en ellas [las piezas en un acto llamadas sainetes] al desaliño y rudeza villanesca de nuestros entremeses, la imitación exacta y graciosa de las modernas costumbres del pueblo." On the other hand, Moratín criticized the ethical values portrayed by those *sainetes*:

[de la Cruz] perdió de vista muchas veces el fin moral que debiera haber dado á sus pequeñas fábulas: prestó al vicio, y aun á los delitos, un colorido tan halagüeño, que hizo aparecer como donaires y travesuras aquellas acciones que desaprueban el pudor y la virtud, y castigan con severidad las leyes.

According to Moratín, de la Cruz "nunca supo inventar una combinación dramática de justa grandeza, un interés bien sostenido, un nudo, un desenlace natural: sus figuras nunca forman un grupo dispuesto con arte." However, he acknowledged that "casi todas están imitadas de la naturaleza con admirable fidelidad."

9. Iriarte turned his criticism to de la Cruz's zarzuelas into a personal matter, asking publicly for his murder:

Yo le juro á Vm. que si de este modo ó de otro viese servir de diversión al público en el tablado mi persona, como las de otros honrados vecinos de esta villa, me hallaría en la necesidad de tomar la satisfacción con otro instrumento que la pluma. No sé cómo los abates no han pensado ya en usar espada, después de las injurias que han recibido de D. Ramón, y cómo no le han dado con un . . . ¡Déjeme Vm., que estoy furioso! (Cotarelo y Mori 442)

Cruz's works were censured to build a difference in which authors such as Iriarte could present themselves as free from the compromises with the past.¹⁰

Leandro Fernández de Moratín had at least one opportunity to propose a new brand of zarzuela. However, he did not take up the challenge. As René Andioc explains in his well-known article titled “*Une zarzuela retrouvée: Le Barón, de Moratín*,” when Moratín was 27 years old (in 1787), he received a commission from the Countess of Benavente, the protector of Ramón de la Cruz, to write a zarzuela. This unique opportunity could have brought him recognition and admiration at a time when he had not yet released any work to the public. As the young author declared in a letter from Paris addressed to Jovellanos, he put his talent immediately to work in “disputar la corona melodramática al poeta cuadrillero” (*El Barón* 35), referring to de la Cruz, who was Teniente Cuadrillero Mayor de la Santa Hermandad Vieja de Toledo. Instead of competing for the laurels of fame by engaging with the zarzuela genre, Moratín let himself be overcome by the prejudice against musical drama. For Moratín, the commission to compose a zarzuela, rather than a fortunate chance, was “una dura y repugnante ocupación” (35). Furthermore, he felt that the simple fact of writing a zarzuela was incompatible with any sort of literary quality: “yo de mí sé que la cosa saldrá malísima, si Dios no lo remedia” (36).¹¹ Moratín not only showed a lack of interest for

10. Emilio Cotarelo y Mori interprets the rejection of de la Cruz's works by the *ilustración* in a different way. For him, it is mainly envy what moves de la Cruz's opponents:

El pueblo aplaudía al poeta y gozaba con la obra, y aun muchas veces no iba al teatro sino que por el sainete. Por eso no puede explicarse más que por un mal encubierto despecho, el afán de censurar y atacar á D. Ramón de la Cruz que se observa en los autores de su tiempo. (82–83)

11. Moratín completed the libretto of the zarzuela *El Barón*, but chose to keep it for himself. He did not reconsider the text until 1802, when he rewrote and released it the following year as one of his comedies. When it was performed in 1803, it was reviled and dismissed by the *panduros*, the Madrilenian *aficionados* affiliated with the Coliseo de los Caños del Peral, and thus defenders of musical theater. In the definitive work's prefacing *Advertencia* (69–72), Moratín himself writes about the events that led him to strongly oppose any attempt to add music to his text. As Moratín tell us, in spite of his tenacious opposition to musical theater, the abandoned libretto of 1787, full of changes and mutations, was set to music without his consent by José Lidón, the First Organist of the Royal Chapel of Madrid. The piece was even secretly performed in a theater in Cadiz. When Moratín found out about these events, he decided to return to the text and presented it to the public as a comedy, to ensure that it could not be set to music again. In the *Advertencia*, Moratín states, “[el autor] suprimió todo lo añadido por mano ajena y todo lo cantable” (70). The work was then stripped of Lidón's score, along with any chance of it ever again being a musical drama.

musical theater, but also led an attack against music. He argued in the following terms:

Mi opinión es que el arte de añadir por medio de la música energía y belleza a la declamación, sin perjuicio de la verosimilitud, todavía no se ha descubierto. (36)

While Moratín did not see any benefit in applying music to declamation, the European philosophy of the time regarded music as the foremost communicative tool. The fact that music deploys a non-conceptual language supported the idea that the modern subject could finally express itself and be understood in its whole individuality. Moreover, music blurs the opposition between private and public spheres, as it overcomes the conceptual limitations of verbal language. National opera embodied this utopia of unrestricted communication by displacing social interaction from symbolic language to the broader realm of music and performance. It reintegrated the subject into the community of musical listeners. In fact, national opera became the most successful representation of the bourgeois utopia of communicative action, to use Habermas's term. It substituted the historical struggle for political freedom with the display of characters able to fully communicate through singing, whose freedom was safeguarded by aesthetic autonomy.

In Spain, the situation was rather different. Indeed, although it might have seemed the opposite, and although the *ilustración* constructed a history of Spanish culture in which music appears to be the least representative of the arts (in fact, as the reader has probably noticed, the history of Spanish musical drama focuses on librettists rather than on composers, thereby reversing the European model), the "deficiencies" were not those of the musicians. Spain had enjoyed an enviable musical tradition. Many of the most famous European musicians spent some time in Madrid during the eighteenth century because the first Bourbons invested enormously in music. Moratín's comments regarding the irrelevance of music as a theatrical tool, therefore, have to be regarded as part of the anti-musical prejudice of the *ilustración*, who wished not for full communication or aesthetic autonomy, but rather to maintain the inherited artistic paradigm. Moratín's negative attitude toward music and zarzuela presented, indeed, a clear contrast with the European culture of the moment, which was focused on the production of musical theater. Moratín received the commission to write a zarzuela in 1787, the same year in which Mozart composed *Don Giovanni*, and released his work

as straight comedy in 1803—the same year that Beethoven began composing his opera *Fidelio*. The contrast, although unequal, is justifiable because the three pieces represent two antithetic aesthetic paradigms: the European one focused on the construction of a national opera and the Spanish one determined to deny that possibility. It is a revealing coincidence that the three works cited earlier take place in Spain, those by Mozart and Beethoven in Seville, and the one by Moratín in the *Manchego* village of Illescas. The European authors' choice of Spain to represent a conflict is fully justified by Moratín's prejudicial claim. In fact, Spain became the territory on which modern musical drama had to come to terms with harsh criticism. Moratín's negative attitude toward music recalls the secular censorship that, since the Council of Trent, most Spanish intellectuals imposed on the supposed inherent superficiality of the musical art, a prejudice that persisted until very recently. This prejudice, however, is part of the sum of forces that generated modern zarzuela.

Ilustración and Musical Censorship

The Counter-Reformist agenda of controlling musical freedom and change was widely maintained by the Spanish intellectuals of the eighteenth century. They regularly judged new music as inferior to that of the past, rejecting the musical aesthetics first introduced by the Bourbons and then by the Madrilenian urban classes. Benito Jerónimo Feijoo's ideas testify to the intellectuals' repulsion to the king's attempt to modernize Spanish music during the early 1700s. His ideas on music were broadly discussed at the time and constitute the immediate antecedents to Jovellanos, Iriarte, and Moratín's negative attitude toward modern musical drama. In fact, Feijoo's criticisms of Italian *opera seria* and defense of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish ecclesiastical music share the same terms and ideology of those of his successors, who reacted against the inclusion of popular culture in aristocratic musical theater. They share a Platonic concept of music as an educational tool aimed at supporting the established institutions. The *ilustrados'* opposition to musical change, as well as their severe criticism, first, of the music introduced by the absolutist power, and then, of that launched by the urban audiences of Madrid, constitutes an aesthetic ideology with conservative political implications.

In *Teatro crítico* (I 285–309), Feijoo severely denigrates Italian *opera seria* and criticizes any transformation of the musical tradition of Spain:

Verdaderamente, yo, cuando me acuerdo de la antigua seriedad Española, no puedo menos de admirar que haya caído tanto, que sólo gustemos de Músicas de tararira. Parece que la celebrada gravedad de los Españoles ya se redujo sólo a andar envarados por las calles. Los Italianos nos han hecho esclavos de su gusto con la falsa lisonja de que la Música se ha adelantado mucho en este tiempo. Yo creo, que lo que llaman adelantamiento, es ruina, o está muy cerca de serlo. (“La Música de los Templos” I XIV [24])

When Feijoo declares music is being ruined, he refers to the absence of an ethical basis such as that found in the ecclesiastical music of Tomás Luis de Victoria and Cristóbal Morales. Without this basis, music exacerbates people’s lowest instincts: “era la Música obsequio de las Deidades; después se hizo lisonja de las pasiones” (idem). For Feijoo, since modern music has forgotten its religious (or political) purpose, it has become useless and aesthetically deficient. In *Cartas eruditas y curiosas* (I 335–43), Feijoo writes: “Parece fuera de toda duda, que la Música de estos tiempos no produce los admirables efectos que se refieren de la de los antiguos” (“Maravillas de la Música y cotejo de la antigua con la moderna” I Carta XLIV, [236]). According to this author, musical conservatism is necessary to prevent the breakdown of the Spanish social system, since modern music would eventually lead to the loss of the Spanish way of living.¹²

Tomás de Iriarte reintroduced similar ideas in the didactic poem *La música*, written in 1779. This piece of literature is particularly significant since the author was himself a writer of *tonadillas* and *seguidillas* and a skillful violinist. Like Feijoo, Iriarte judges the ecclesiastical music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the most valuable produced in Spain.¹³ His taste

12. For a full analysis of Feijoo’s ideas on music, see Antonio Martín Moreno.

13. In the Third Canto of his poem, Iriarte writes:

Mas entre las naciones
Que por varios caminos
Del arte apuran hoi las invenciones
Empleadas en cánticos divinos,
¡O quanto sobresales,
Antigua Iglesia Hispana! (232–33)

for more contemporary music is limited to Italian *opera seria* and German instrumental music (he had a particular preference for Haydn). The hybrid genres of musical theater are not explicitly addressed in the poem, although a critique of them can be inferred, for the narrator opposes any distortion of the Italian *opera seria* model. The musical philosophy displayed in the poem is, indeed, bonded to the elitist conception of music characteristic of the early eighteenth century. Popular influences are tolerated only if they do not compromise the universal ideal of *opera seria*; they may simply enrich the piece with picturesque and colorful rhythms and sonorities. For Iriarte, cultural particularity had to come to terms with the common values shared by the different cultural traditions. In fact, Iriarte's position regarding zarzuela is very revealing. In the Fourth Canto of the poem, the author imagines a dialogue with the Italian composer Nicolas Jommelli, who exposes the qualities and history of Italian *opera seria*. At the end of the Canto, the narrator intervenes to correct Jommelli about his omission of Spanish musical theater, informing him about the characteristics of zarzuela and *tonadilla*, musical genres that should not be unnoticed.¹⁴ Immediately after praising the Spanish genres of musical theater, however, Iriarte criticizes how contemporary composers misuse these genres. Focusing on *tonadilla*, Iriarte censures the innovations that were introduced in his days:

Reconociendo abusos

[. . .]

Muchos que en las Tonadas se introducen,

Y su carácter nacional deslucen;

Pues uno eleva tanto

El estilo en asuntos familiares,

14. Iriarte's poem states the following in the Fourth Canto:

Que Zarzuela se llama,
 En que el discurso hablado
 Ya con frecuentes arias se interpola,
 O ya con duo, coro y recitado;
 Cuya mezcla, si acaso se condena,
 Disculpa debe hallar en la Española
 Natural prontitud, acostumbrada
 A una rápida acción, de lances llena,
 En que la recitada cantilena
 Es rémora tal vez que no le agrada. (266–67)

Que aun suele para rústicos cantares
 De heroicas arias usurpar el canto;
 Otro le zurce vestidura extraña
 De retazos ni suyos, ni de España;
 Otro quiere con tránsito violento
 Mudar cada momento
 Mil diferentes clases
 De tonos, modos, aires y compases,
 De suerte que el oído no consigue
 Sonoridad que le deleite un rato,
 Y que no le confunda ni fatigue. (267–68)

Iriarte supported the Spanish genres of musical theater, but only those that were the patrimony of the aristocracy. He admired composers such as Literes and Nebra of the beginning of the eighteenth century, but criticized the transformations of zarzuela and *tonadilla* after 1768, when Ramón de la Cruz popularized them by fusing popular and elite traditions. It is interesting to note that Iriarte gives musical reasons to oppose contemporary *tonadillas*, pointing to technical deficiencies such as confusing sonorities and constant modulation. Nevertheless, Iriarte's argument relies on a previous condemnation based on his own ethical and political positioning. In fact, most of the composers who lived in Spain during that time wrote both *opera seria* and hybrid genres of musical theater. Rather than technical deficiencies, the differences were mainly in the content of those compositions (e.g. a classic versus a popular text, the presence or lack of popular musical tradition). What Iriarte wanted to criticize was the hybridity and the popularization of musical art, which were the prevailing trend during the late eighteenth century. Probably for this reason Iriarte wanted the Academy to protect music from popular influences. The last part of final Canto consists precisely of a long laudatory section in which the author summarizes the merits of Music in order to be admitted in the Academy. Iriarte brings in a character named Buen-gusto to introduce Music to her sisters, the other Arts, arguing the convenience of admitting her to the Academy. Buen-gusto exhorts Music imperatively:

Que aquí de Filarmónicos un día
 Floreciente Academia se instituya.
 Esta que debe ser empresa tuya
 El auge mas dichoso me promete.

Tú harás que se sujete
A sólidos preceptos mi doctrina. (292)

By making Music part of the Academy, Buen-gusto saves her from the innovations, contaminations, and pernicious influences of the masses, which, according to the *ilustrado* authors had a stubborn tendency toward bad taste. In the poem, the Arts agree with Buen-gusto's claim, and the narrator concludes with the famous verses:

Así con amistosa competencia
Música y Poesía
En una misma lira tocarémos. (298)¹⁵

The bond between Music and Poetry that Iriarte has in mind is not that of the hybrid genres of musical theater, but rather, the old one of *opera seria*, or aristocratic zarzuela of the beginning of the eighteenth century. In fact, the aim of the poem, as well as the goal of introducing Music in the Academy, is to impose an unquestionable musical conservatism. Rather than an expression of the self, Iriarte regarded music as the expression of archetypical feelings, which are defined by traditional poetic genres. Although elitist and outdated, Iriarte's concept of music was that which was supported by the State. The Count of Floridablanca patronized Iriarte's *La música* when he was in office, and provided public funds for its publication in an elegant edition. In spite of the investment, the poem was not very influential. It was well received abroad, particularly in Italy, where Metastasio praised it as a masterpiece. But in Spain, Iriarte's poem was ignored both for its strange topic (which had no precedent in Spanish letters) and for the fact that it promoted an outdated style of music.¹⁶ Iriarte, refraining from the inclina-

15. Francisco Asenjo Barbieri quoted Iriarte's verses when he became the first musician to be admitted in La Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando on March 13, 1892. The fact that music was not accepted until that late indicates the discomfort the Academy felt in relation to the music produced by the Spanish modernity. Iriarte's words were particularly suited for the occasion. They celebrate music as an ideal, not as an actual cultural product.

16. Iriarte's poem *La música* was extensively criticized for poetic deficiencies. Félix María de Samaniego ridiculed it in *Coplas para cantar al violín, á guisa de tonadilla*:

Cantar la música Iriarte
se propuso en un poema
y en lugar de sinfonía
tocó la gaita gallega. (Cotarelo y Mori 210)

tion to change taste with the times, is typical of the *ilustrado* intellectuals' detachment regarding the cultural processes that were taking place in the Spanish society of the time.

Rather than favoring the emergence of new audiences and musical values, Iriarte, with Jovellanos and Moratín, demanded the banning of theatrical music to safeguard culture from the unremitting influence of the masses. In contrast with the eighteenth-century European tendency of considering music to be an expression of the ideal of freedom and a sublime expression of the power of the modern subject, the Spanish *ilustrados*, jealous of their authority, reacted against the emergence of the notion of aesthetic taste as an autonomous instance, since it would displace judgment from the traditional institutions.¹⁷ While in Europe subjects gradually became participants of the success or failure of a work of art, in Spain the elites tried to maintain audiences in their traditional position of vassals, subjugated to the authority of the established institutions (the traditional censorship of the Church, or the intellectual criticism of the *ilustrados*). Iriarte implored those in charge of upholding public order to act against the defenders of popular theater, particularly against de la Cruz:

¿qué policía, qué religión, qué luz natural autorizará en un siglo *ilustrado* y en una corte el error de confundir los ingenios de los hombres con sus costumbres? Que no haya una buena alma que vaya á verse con aquel venerable carmelita que predica los sábados en la Puerta del Sol y le diga: Padre, así como Vm. reprende el vicio de murmurar en las visitas y casas particulares, ¿por qué no reprende también la maldad de infamar al prójimo en público y mucho más en el teatro? (Cotarelo y Mori 443)

In this passage, Iriarte sees himself as a priest of culture, and links religion and *ilustración* to the task of protecting the public's moral welfare. By appealing to the authority of the "Padre," the *ilustrado* intellectual empowers himself with the right of censuring the quality of art. In fact, Iriarte feels

17. In *Desengaños al teatro español* (I 8), Nicolás de Moratín (the dramaturge's father) wrote the following referring implicitly to Ramón de la Cruz:

No son los académicos de la Academia Española, no los de la de Ciencias de Londres ó París, ni de los arcades de Roma, sino los mismos comediantes, y aun más, los poetastros y versificantes saineteros y entremeseros, que andan siempre agregados á las compañías: estos son los jueces que en España tiene la poesía. (Cotarelo y Mori 85)

authorized to plead for the involvement of the Government in imposing an active cultural scrutiny:

Nos ofrecen las de D. Ramón de la Cruz defectos tan graves que merecen censurarse, no en una carta sino en una crítica muy seria, ó tal vez en una representación al Gobierno. (Cotarelo y Mori 445)

Furthermore, Moratín encouraged the Prime Minister to take legal action against zarzuela. In a letter from London addressed to Godoy in 1792, Moratín argued:

La música teatral está [. . .] atrasada y envilecida; ni es otra cosa en la parte poética que un hacinamiento de frialdades, chocarrerías y desvergüenzas; en la parte musical, un conjunto de imitaciones inconexas, sin unidad, sin carácter, sin gracia, sin gusto. (Peña y Goñi 37)

Similarly, Jovellanos corroborated this attitude when he wrote the following in his *Memoria para el arreglo de la policía de espectáculos y diversiones públicas y sobre su origen en España*:

¿Qué otra cosa es en el día nuestra música teatral que un conjunto de insípidas e incoherentes imitaciones, sin originalidad, sin carácter, sin gusto y aplicadas casual y arbitrariamente a una necia e incoherente poesía? ¿Qué otra cosa nuestros bailes que una miserable imitación de las libres e indecentes danzas de la ínfima plebe? (140)

Fernando de la Flor suggests that such opinions “establecen paralelamente una patria mítica, idealizada, de la ópera situada en el pasado” (38). In my view, however, the will to control the popular genres of musical theater, in addition to being a melancholic gesture of stale conservative elitism, also exposed the “differential” cultural program of the most influential authors of the Spanish late eighteenth century, who were unwilling to foster new musical forms. In fact, Iriarte, Moratín, and Jovellanos’s proposals to impose their ideas on the arts, along with their repudiation of zarzuela, *sainete lírico*, and *tonadilla escénica* for their liberality, points to the darkest side of the educational and social programs of modernity, as much as it reveals the anti-musical spirit, and their dependence on Baroque ethics and aesthetics.

Although the criticisms of Feijoo, Jovellanos, Iriarte, and Moratín had only

limited consequences for their contemporaries, they were fully successful in excluding the music produced in the late eighteenth century from the cultural legacy that has been passed down to us. The eighteenth century has been regarded as a period of crisis for Spanish music, especially for Spanish musical theater, and musicians were to blame. Peña y Goñi, the most influential of the late nineteenth-century musical critics, defined the eighteenth century in terms that recall *ilustrado* positions, even though he was a passionate defender of Ramón de la Cruz:

Por de pronto baste saber que la historia de nuestra música en todo el pasado siglo [el siglo XVIII] no ofrece nada interesante que no se contraiga a las compañías italianas que actuaron en varios teatros de Madrid durante aquella época. (33)

Since the late 1980s, musicology has undertaken a revision of the eighteenth century.¹⁸ But the influence of eighteenth-century intellectuals on the reception of Spanish music has not been evaluated until now. I have shown, the reasons for the alleged crisis of Spanish eighteenth-century music stemmed not from the lack of talent or good taste of Spanish musicians or from the competition of their Italian colleagues (who also cultivated Spanish musical genres), but derived largely from the negative opinions of intellectuals such as Jovellanos, Iriarte, and Moratín.

To conclude, I would like to point out that in 1864, more than half a century after having written his *Memoria*, Jovellanos reappears in the musical theater that he criticized so extensively. In the zarzuela *Pan y toros* by Francisco Asenjo Barbieri, Jovellanos is reincarnated as the “esperanza única” of saving Spain from falling into the clutches of the French during the Spanish War of Independence.¹⁹ This is a cruel paradox (another being Teatro de la

18. Antonio Gallego's *La música en tiempos de Carlos III* has strongly influenced the current revaluation of Spanish eighteenth-century music. Mary Neal Hamilton's *Music in Eighteenth Century Spain*, originally published in 1937, is a pioneering revaluation worthy of mention.

19. In the second act of Barbieri's *Pan y toros*, the Princess reminds the Capitan of the importance of supporting Jovellanos. For the Princess, Jovellanos is the embodiment of the spirit of Spain:

. . . don Gaspar de Jovellanos,
 esperanza única ya. [. . .]
 no pensemos en nosotros,
 en España hay que pensar. (II: 10)

Zarzuela's address: calle Jovellanos 4). While Jovellanos strongly opposed zarzuela, Spanish culture of the nineteenth century made him a defender of the *zarzuelera* cause against the *afrancesamiento*. Jovellanos's support of zarzuela should be regarded as a perverse distortion of historical facts. It brilliantly points out, however, the impossibility of detaching zarzuela from the cultural and historical circumstances that surrounded it. Barbieri's zarzuela shows that Ramón de la Cruz's efforts to build a Spanish musical theater, and Jovellanos, Iriarte, and Moratín's efforts to prevent and frustrate it, were, after all, not as incompatible as they seemed at first glance, but rather elements that forged the distinctiveness of the Spanish zarzuela of the last third of the eighteenth century.

Works Cited

- Andioc, René. "Une zarzuela retrouvée: Le Barón, de Moratín." *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 1 (1965): 289–321.
- Barbieri, Francisco Asenjo, and José Picón. *Pan y toros*. Madrid: Administración Lírico-Dramática, 1889.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1984.
- Bowie, Andrew. *Aesthetics and Subjectivity from Kant to Nietzsche*. Manchester, NY: Manchester UP, 2003.
- Bussey, William M. *French and Italian Influence on the Zarzuela: 1700–1770*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research P, 1982.
- Carreras, Juan José. "Entre la zarzuela y la ópera de corte: representaciones cortesanas en el Buen Retiro entre 1720 y 1724." *Teatro y música en España (siglo XVIII)*. *Actas del Simposio Internacional, Salamanca 1994*. Ed. Rainer Kleinertz. Kassel: Reichenberger, 1996. 49–77.
- . "From Literes to Nebra: Spanish Dramatic Music between Tradition and Modernity." *Music in Spain during the Eighteenth Century*. Ed. Malcolm Boyd and Juan José Carreras. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998. 7–16.
- Cotarelo y Mori, Emilio. *Iriarte y su época*. Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1897.
- Cruz, Ramón de la. *Colección de sainetes tanto impresos como inéditos con un discurso preliminar de D. Agustín Duran, y los juicios críticos de los Sres. Martínez de la Rosa, Signorelli, Moratín y Hartzenbusch*. Madrid: Yenes, 1843.
- Dahlhaus, Carl. *The Idea of Absolute Music*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1989.
- Feijoo, Jerónimo Benito. *Cartas eruditas y curiosas*. Madrid: Imprenta Real de la Gazeta, a costa de la Real Compañía de Impresores y Libreros, 1777.
- . *Teatro crítico universal*. Madrid: D. Joaquín Ibarra, a costa de la Real Compañía de Impresores y Libreros, 1778.
- Flor, Fernando R. de la. "El canto catártico: el teatro músico como utopía de la obra de

- arte total en la ilustración española." *Teatro y música en España (siglo XVIII)*. *Actas del Simposio Internacional Salamanca 1994*. Ed. Rainer Kleinertz. Kassel: Reichenberger, 1996. 13–47.
- Fubini, Enrico. *Gli enciclopedisti e la musica*. Torino: G. Einaudi, 1971.
- . *Music and Culture in Eighteenth-Century Europe*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994.
- Gallego, Antonio. *La música en tiempos de Carlos III: ensayo sobre el pensamiento musical ilustrado*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988.
- Gillot, Hubert. *La querelle des anciens et des modernes en France. De la Défense et illustration de la langue française aux Parallèles des anciens et des modernes*. Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1968.
- Habermas, Jürgen. *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Boston: Beacon, 1984–1987.
- Hamilton, Mary Neal. *Music in Eighteenth Century Spain*. New York: Da Capo, 1971.
- Iriarte, Tomás de. *Colección de obras en verso y prosa. (Vol I Fábulas literarias, La música. Vol II Varias poesías)*. Madrid: Benito Cano, 1787.
- Jovellanos, Gaspar de. *Memoria para el arreglo de la policía de espectáculos y diversiones públicas y sobre su origen en España*. Madrid: Cátedra, 1986.
- Kleinertz, Rainer. "La zarzuela del siglo XVIII entre ópera y comedia. Dos aspectos de un género musical (1730–1750)." *Teatro y música en España (siglo XVIII)*. *Actas del Simposio Internacional, Salamanca 1994*. Ed. Rainer Kleinertz. Kassel: Reichenberger, 1996. 107–21.
- Launay, Denise. *La Querelle des bouffons: texte des pamphlets*. Genève: Minkoff Reprint, 1973.
- Martín Moreno, Antonio. *El padre Feijoo y las ideologías musicales del XVIII en España*. Orense: Instituto de Estudios Orensanos, 1976.
- McGeary, Thomas. "Farinelli in Madrid: Opera, Politics, and the War of Jenkins's Ear." *Musical Quarterly* 82.2 (1998): 383–421.
- Moratín, Leandro Fernández de. "Juicio crítico." *Colección de sainetes tanto impresos como inéditos con un discurso preliminar de D. Agustín Duran, y los juicios críticos de los Sres. Martínez de la Rosa, Signorelli, Moratín y Hartzenbusch*. Ramón de la Cruz. Madrid: Yenes, 1843. XIV–XV.
- . *El Barón. El sí de las niñas*. Esplugues de Llobregat, Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1984.
- Moratín, Nicolás Fernández de. *La petimetra: desengaños al teatro español, sátiras*. Madrid: Castalia, 1996.
- Muratori, Lodovico Antonio. *Reflexiones sobre el buen gusto en las ciencias y en las artes*. Madrid: Don Antonio de Sancha, 1782.
- Peña y Goñi, Antonio. *España desde la ópera a la zarzuela*. Madrid: Alianza, 1967.
- Rigault, Hippolyte. *Histoire de la querelle des anciens et des modernes*. New York: B. Franklin, 1965.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Écrits sur la musique*. Ed. Catherine Kintzler. Paris: Stock, 1979.
- . *Essai sur l'origine des langues*. Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1974.