

# BETWEEN HUNGARY AND SPAIN: MUSICAL ENCOUNTERS BEHIND EUROPE

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## FROM TRANSNATIONAL EXCHANGES TO MUSICAL ENCOUNTERS

HUNGARY AND SPAIN are two countries with no apparent connection other than that each of them is geographically located on the outskirts of Europe, which has perhaps led to their limited influence on the shaping of European cultural identity across the centuries. Nevertheless, this very peripheral location has given each of them a certain exotic appearance, mostly in connection with Gypsy music, placing their musical development outside the Western mainstream.

This reductionist view can be extended if — as Cook points out — we «move musical encounters, of whatever nature, to the centre of musicological explanation, emphasizing how they embody the specific actions, judgements and choices of human agents, and how these are afforded but not determined by the specific circumstances within which people act, judge and choose»<sup>1</sup>. Cook follows Slobin, who intended to lay out as relationally as possible «the musical interplay — the cultural counterpoint — between individual, community, small group, state and industry»<sup>2</sup>. This relational approach is extended by the introduction of the term ‘interculture’ to refer to the expansive reach of musical forces which cross even far flung frontiers. Cultures do not simply signify in their own right but are constructed and acquire meaning in terms of their relationships with other cultures. This same approach appeared when Ralph Locke spoke of the exotic features perceived by a community in a musical work being not in the music but rather as «the product of a relational process between that community and the work»<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>. COOK 2012, p. 194.

<sup>2</sup>. SLOBIN 1992, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>. LOCKE 2009, p. 11.

What follows is an attempt to study musical relations between Hungary and Spain. This entails not only an approach to transnational exchanges but, more accurately, the presence of Spanish music in Hungary and the meanings it acquired concerning Hungarian culture.

#### GYPSY MUSIC: A SPANISH-HUNGARIAN LINK

In 1941, the *New York Times* published a review of new recordings of Gypsy music<sup>4</sup>. A Decca recording dedicated to *Hungarian Gypsy Music*<sup>5</sup> was compared to a Columbia recording of Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* (with the composer himself at the piano<sup>6</sup>), to contrast the 'original' Hungarian music with the gypsy music. Furthermore, «since the gypsies also settled in Spain and Russia, and created music in those countries as well as Hungary, two other current albums are of interest here»<sup>7</sup>. One was the Victor recording *Gypsy Songs from old Russia*<sup>8</sup>, and (last but not least) the other was the Columbia recording *Cante Flamenco*<sup>9</sup>, which was described as «a collection of eight songs of the Andalusian gypsies of Southern Spain, sung by Pastora Pavon, who is known as 'La Nina de los Peines' ('The Girl with the Combs')»<sup>10</sup>.

Ross Parmenter, the author of the review, highlighted the gypsies as the composers, stressing that it was not true that Gypsies were not gifted in composition, and nor was it true that their main contribution was only in the performance of the music, not in the writing of it<sup>11</sup>. He found similarities in these recordings: they were not beautiful, but they were passionate, with a wailing effect which was interspersed by a sort of dramatic speech.

Although all these records coincided with the recording industry business picking up after 1936, and although they fitted in with the companies' thematic specialisations<sup>12</sup>, the records made a significant contribution to the creation of an almost mythical image of Gypsy music: an image which was shared by both Hungary and Spain<sup>13</sup>.

In fact, Gypsy musicians had been one of the big musical attractions of both the 1878 and 1889 Paris World Fairs<sup>14</sup>. Hungarian gypsy musicians were one of the musical magnets of the

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<sup>4</sup>. PARMENTER 1941.

<sup>5</sup>. MAGYARI 1941.

<sup>6</sup>. BARTÓK 1940.

<sup>7</sup>. PARMENTER 1941, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup>. GYPSY 1941.

<sup>9</sup>. CANTE 1941.

<sup>10</sup>. PARMENTER 1941, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup>. See PIOTROWSKA 2013A and PIOTROWSKA 2021.

<sup>12</sup>. GRONOW 1983.

<sup>13</sup>. The image of Gypsy's, and how has been shaped since 19<sup>th</sup> century, is discussed in depth in: LISTZ – SAYN-WITTGENSTEIN 1859; and PIOTROWSKA 2013B.

<sup>14</sup>. FAUSER 2005, pp. 257ff.



ILL. 1: *Les Gitanes de Grenade*, Paris, Affiches Françaises Emile Levy, 1889.

1878 Fair, even being compared to ‘an invasion’. In 1889, they were tempered by the even more exotic and more ‘authentic’ gypsy music from Romania and Spain. Spanish gypsy *cantaoras* and *bailaoras* (singers and dancers) — especially *Les gitanes de Grenade* — were lumped together there with Romanian *lautards*<sup>15</sup>. The ‘true, authentic’, exotic music was both an attraction at small cafés and a big hit at the Grand Théâtre de l’Exposition<sup>16</sup>.

#### SPANISH CULTURE IN HUNGARY

Although Gypsiness is one of the most powerful cultural links between Hungary and Spain — and as such these cultural links have been shaped by both general and musicological scholarship — our aim here is to explore other cultural and musical encounters, completely separate from Zingaresse and Gypsies. That is, our focus here is on the presence of Spanish music in Hungary in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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<sup>15</sup>. HARPER’S 1889.

<sup>16</sup>. GRAND THÉÂTRE 1889.

Initially, a strong cultural presence first developed at theatres because Spanish plays and dramas were very popular in the Austrian court. The first Spanish theatrical works which premiered in Hungary at the end of the 18th century were penned by Calderón<sup>17</sup>, Lope de Vega and Moreto, with adaptations made by travelling German theatrical companies<sup>18</sup>. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these same original works from the Spanish theatrical Golden Age began to be translated and premiered in Hungarian theatres, to great success<sup>19</sup>.

This reception was in tune with the *Zeitgeist* of the wider Hungarian national discourse, which throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century was based on the revitalisation of a cultural heritage and of a collective memory in the Hungarian language<sup>20</sup>. As a result, in 1844, Hungarian courts enacted a law recognising Hungarian as the official language, and in turn, this awakened a great interest in the foreign works which constituted the world literary canon.

Cervantes' *Don Quijote* is one of the earlier Spanish works appearing in political, cultural and literary Hungarian life. It was first mentioned by György Alajos Szerdahelyi (1740-1808), Aesthetics Professor and a Jesuit, in his *Poesis Narrativa* (1784)<sup>21</sup>, as a model for all literate men. However, a complete Hungarian translation did not appear until 1875 — nearly 100 years later! — which demonstrates the challenges of translating foreign manuscripts into the Hungarian literary language<sup>22</sup>.

Together with Spanish Golden Age theatre and the *Quijote* novel, a contemporary Spanish dramatist, José Echegaray, burst onto the Hungarian stage even before he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1904. His work *El gran galeoto* (1881) was translated into Hungarian only nine years after its publication in Spanish (*A nagy Galeotto*, 1890)<sup>23</sup>, with Echegaray being introduced as the great reviver of Spanish drama, and being compared to Shakespeare, Balzac, or Molière<sup>24</sup>.

It was a similar story with Pedro Antonio de Alarcón's novel, *The Three-Cornered Hat* (1874), which was translated into Hungarian only 20 years after the Spanish original was published. Moreover, Alarcón was already a well-known writer in Hungary in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and was even included in Hungarian dictionaries<sup>25</sup>, being compared with that other great Spanish master: the painter Francisco de Goya<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup>. CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA 1683 and CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA 1783.

<sup>18</sup>. See KATONA 2017.

<sup>19</sup>. KATONA 2017, p. 546.

<sup>20</sup>. See KISS 2013.

<sup>21</sup>. SZERDAHELYI, 1784, p. 148.

<sup>22</sup>. See CERVANTES 1873.

<sup>23</sup>. ECHEGARAY 1890.

<sup>24</sup>. *Ibidem*, p. 548.

<sup>25</sup>. See TOLNAI 1912.

<sup>26</sup>. See BENYHE 1957.



ILL. 2: *A háromszögletű kalap* (Budapest, Opera House, 1928). Magyar Ballet 1826-1939 (17) With kind permission of the National Széchényi Library, Budapest.

The Hungarian translation of the Alarcón play, *A három-szögletű kalap*, is cited as a source for foreign operas and for Falla's ballet. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the Budapest Opera House (Magyar Állami Operaház) and the Municipal Theatre (Városi Színház) developed intensive opera, theatre, and ballet seasons, in association with the main European capitals. De Falla's ballet was premiered in Budapest in 1927, by Diaghilev's Russian Ballet, in the Municipal Theatre, under the Hungarian title *A háromszögletű kalap*. The piece had such success that it had to be repeated three times. Moreover, a Hungarian production premiered in the Budapest Opera House one year later, and this production continued until 1963, delivering a total of 75 performances. The sources of this latter production (among others, the handwritten performance scores) which are preserved in the National Széchényi Library, and in the Archives of the Hungarian State Opera House, reveal an intense work of choreographic adaptation, along with careful design of staging, costumes, lightning, and scenery effects, all accomplished by great international personalities, to make this very Spanish ballet understandable to the Magyar audience. Falla's work also found a significant support in the



press, highlighting both the plot's universality and the expressiveness of his music, which had made it a Hungarian success<sup>27</sup>. The writer was still recognised as late as 1966, because «many of his works were popular among Hungarian readers in the last century»<sup>28</sup>.

#### ZARZUELA IN HUNGARY

The first reference to the Zarzuela can be found in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the German geographer Johann Hübner (1668-1731) wrote a dictionary of Hungarian place-names<sup>29</sup>. In this, he briefly described the place which was the very beginning of Spanish zarzuela — the name and the musical genre. At the end of the century, *A Pallas nagy lexikona*, the first encyclopaedia in Hungarian, included what was then the most complete definition of zarzuela at that time: «a dramatic work of singular and musical origin in old Spain, mostly in one or two acts, closer to French operetta»<sup>30</sup>.

Nevertheless, the zarzuela was known in Hungary much earlier, as a significant element not only of Spanish history and culture, but also as a part of musical and social life in Spain. *Marina*, the zarzuela by Arrieta, which had premiered in 1855 in Madrid, caused great excitement for Milassin Vilmos (1841-1906), a Hungarian lawyer and writer who had attended the premiere. Milassin firstly felt astonished by the beautiful melodies of this operetta — as he called it — which he described as being even better than Italian. He was also impressed by the strong musical experience which it provided for the Spanish people, who left the theatre singing melodies from Arrieta's zarzuela along the Madrilenian streets... shortly before midnight<sup>31</sup>. These kinds of reports were commonplace in the Hungarian press<sup>32</sup>, aiming to offer «a drawing and description of theatres in Madrid to the people of the East»<sup>33</sup>.

Far from this exotic view of Spanish music, the Hungarian press also noted accurate data about lyric theatres in Spain, such as the poor economic situation of the Teatro Real after the Glorious Revolution in 1868, or how some Madrilenian theatres were completely dedicated to zarzuela and to Offenbach's operettas<sup>34</sup>. Even more so, the Hungarians echoed Queen María

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<sup>27</sup>. See GIMÉNEZ-RODRÍGUEZ 2018.

<sup>28</sup>. *DEL-MAGYARORSZAG* 1966.

<sup>29</sup>. HÜBNER 1816.

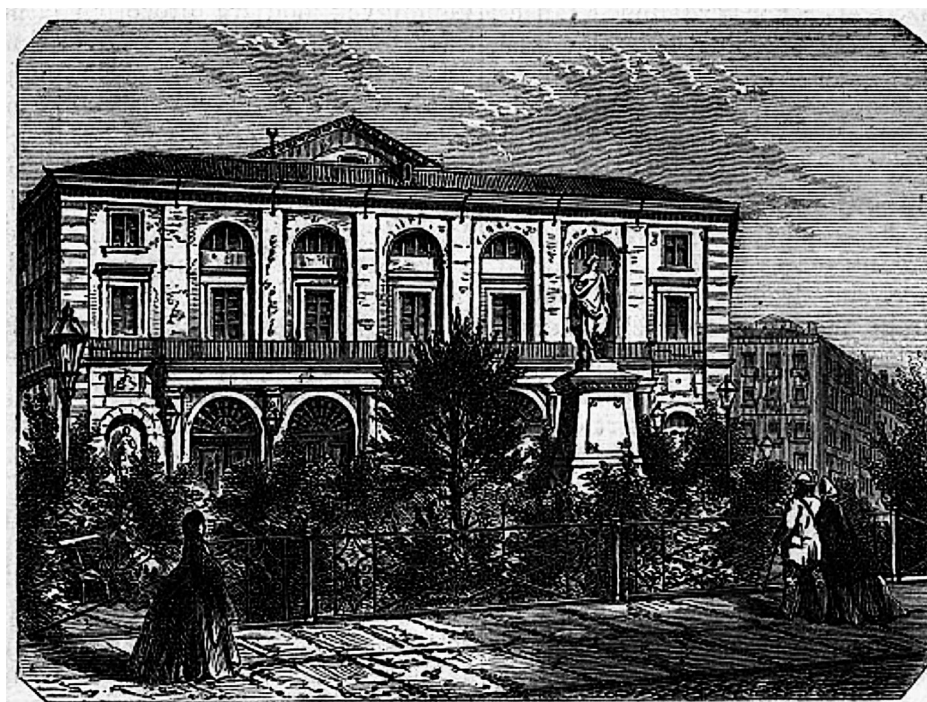
<sup>30</sup>. «Zarzuela: (spany.), ó-spanyol eredetű, énekes és zenés drámai mű, leginkább egy vagy két felvonásból. Legközelebb áll a francia operettehez». *HÚSZAR* 1897, p. 1123.

<sup>31</sup>. MILASSIN 1871.

<sup>32</sup>. There is an article about how Spanish people love theatre, being almost a particularity of Spaniards. It accurately described the people who attended zarzuela or drama, their clothes, their manners, their surprising behaviour compared with other European theatres, such as, for example, the presence of babies with their brood mistress. See *MAGYAR* 1884.

<sup>33</sup>. «[...] madridi színház rajzát és leírását mutatjuk a keleti embereknek». *VASÁRNAPI UJSÁG* 1871, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup>. *PESTI NAPLÓ* 1869, p. 1.



ILL. 3: Teatro Real of Madrid, SÁMI 1869.

Cristina's preference for Italian opera over dramas by Calderon, Lope de Vega, or Zorrilla, which had been relegated to performances at the Teatro Español<sup>35</sup>.

In fact, since the 1870s, the Teatro de la Zarzuela had been considered by the Hungarian press to be the headquarters of the Spanish national opera<sup>36</sup>, usually identifying zarzuela with operetta, right through until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was already clear when the first zarzuela arrived in Budapest in 1898: *Az unatkozó király* (*The Bored King - El rey que rabió*)<sup>37</sup>. The composer Ruperto Chapí (1851-1909) was identified as a significant Spanish composer of «Spanish operetta, that it is to say, zarzuela»<sup>38</sup> by the Hungarian press. Critics noted that zarzuela was strongly influenced by French operetta, a well-established musical genre in Budapest. Thus, critics tried to identify more similarities than differences between both lyric genres, highlighting that the name zarzuela «is equivalent to the French vaudeville, meaning a musical comedy in which music plays less part than in a real operetta»<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>35</sup>. FŐVÁROSI LAPOK 1893, pp. 2295-2296.

<sup>36</sup>. MILASSIN 1871 and MILASSIN 1879.

<sup>37</sup>. See RODRÍGUEZ-LORENZO 2019.

<sup>38</sup>. «[S]panyol operett, gynevezett zarzuela less». 'Irodalom, színház, művészet', in: *Magyar Újság*, 9 November 1898, p. 7.

<sup>39</sup>. «[...] egyenértékű a francia vaudeville-Iel, azaz zenésített vigjátékot jelent, melyben kevesebb rész jut a zenének, mint a valóságos operetteben». FÁZMÁNDY 1898, p. 3.



ILL. 4: Teatro de la Zarzuela of Madrid. VASÁRNAPI UJSÁG 1909.

At the same time, uniquely Spanish characteristics were being identified. The critics distinguished rhythms, motifs, and the use of castanets and triangles in the orchestration. Nevertheless, the deep knowledge of Spanish literature on the part of Hungarian musical critics allowed them to go beyond the common stereotypes that existed in the rest of Europe, choosing to view the interweaving of the plot as explicitly Spanish: «since the venerable Don Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra, who bestowed world literature on her immortal Don Quixote, Spanish writers have been the most fond of chasing their heroes through their adventures, and an adventure series is also the plot of this Spanish operetta»<sup>40</sup>.

Hungary and Spain both faced challenges in strengthening and achieving any universal recognition of their musical particularities, even between the two of them. This was obvious when the operetta *L'enlèvement de la Toledad* by Audran, was performed in 1899 in the Folk Theatre in Budapest. The French operetta's Spanish flavour was highlighted as more authentic

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<sup>40</sup>. «A tiszteletreméltó Don Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra óta, aki a halhatatlan Don Quixote-jával ajándékozta meg a világirodalmat, a spanyol írók a legnagyobb előszeretettel hajszolják keresztül hőseiket a kalandok során s egy kaland-sorozat a cselekménye ennek a spanyol operettnek is». V. – E. 1898, p. 11.



and real than in Chapí's zarzuela. In addition, they pointed out that Audran and Bizet had already written more original Spanish music than had Spaniards:

This is the second Spanish Operetta this year. An unadulterated native of Spanish graces, originally a zarzuela, it comes now at the twilight of the season: *Toledad* — but although a French man wrote this, it is much more authentically Spanish than is the music of the *Bored King*.

Again, this only shows that France is the world's leading [musical] nation. Because, if a Frenchman wants to be Spanish, he's much more than a bridgehead in blood. Audran, like Bizet, wrote more original Spanish music than what he heard along the Tagus<sup>41</sup>.

These musical encounters lead to examining not only the reception of zarzuela in Hungary but also the circulation of lyric companies, their tours, and the presence of Spanish lyric music throughout Europe. On the one hand, sources show the existence of zarzuela companies performing in Hungary, Italy and Austria. According to the press, there was a zarzuela company settled in Milan. It was comprised of 68 members including singers, dancers and a chorus and it was owned by the renowned singer Marietta Alboni. Firstly, this company performed at the Karl Theatre in Vienna and then, in Budapest, thanks to the manager Zsigmon Feld<sup>42</sup>. On the other hand, there is evidence of the presence of Spanish opera and zarzuela as part of European seasons. This was the case for the opera *Los amantes de Teruel* (*The lovers of Teruel*) by Tomás Bretón, whose Spanish premiere was in 1881 and which had its first international performance translated into German as *Die Liebenden von Teruel* in Prague, 1891. *La Bruja* (*The Witch*) was also a very well-known zarzuela by Chapí. It premiered in 1887 in Madrid, was translated into Czech as *Čarodějka*, and was published in 1895<sup>43</sup>.

Moreover, several lyric Spanish composers were well-known in Hungary, including such as Ramón Carnicer, Mariano Vázquez, Francisco Asenjo Barbieri, Tomás Bretón, Ruperto Chapí, and so forth. They often appeared in the Hungarian press, which highlighted their career and their works with a brief biography of them, as well as appearing in the main encyclopaedias of that time<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>41</sup>. «Ez már a második spanyol Operette az idén. Kezdetben volt a zarzuela, hamisítatlan szülötte a spanyol gráciáknak, utána jött most a szezon alkonyán: a *Toledad* — de ennek bár francia ember írta a muzsikáját, sokkal több köze van Spanyolországhoz, mint Az Unatkozó király zenéjének. / Ebből megint csak az következik, hogy a francia a világ első nemzete. Mert ha a francia spanyol akar lenni, sokkal inkább az, mint a vérbeli hidalgó. Audran, akárcsak Bizet, eredetibb spanyol zenét írt annál, amit a Tajo mentén hallani». HÉT 1899, p. 363.

<sup>42</sup>. PESTI HÍRLAP 1894A, p. 3 and PESTI HÍRLAP 1894B, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup>. FŐVÁROSI LAPOK 1891. CHAPÍ 1895. **NO SIGLA**

<sup>44</sup>. MAGYAR LEXICON 1880, p. 131. PALLAS 1893, p. 637. FŐVÁROSI LAPOK 1894A, p. 1510 and FŐVÁROSI LAPOK 1894B, p. 502.

SPANISH PERFORMERS IN HUNGARIAN MUSICAL LIFE

Spanish performers were also introduced into Hungarian musical life, where they remained both active and famous for decades. String musicians in particular were well received, and as virtuosos<sup>45</sup> were able to add to the fascination for Hungarian and Spanish music.

The Spanish violinist Pablo Sarasate (1844-1908) played for the first time in Budapest in March 1877, having been presented in the press as a completely unknown great musician, who had been successful in Vienna three months earlier: «In his playing, the Spanish warm blood permeates his French pleasure and elegance»<sup>46</sup>. All the newspapers remembered Paganini, Liszt — «only Franz Liszt was able to play the piano as Sarasate does the violin»<sup>47</sup> — and almost established a competition between Sarasate and Wienianski — who had played there only a few days before.

From that point onward, he was regularly present in Hungary, displaying his own works in 1893 and being considered «a true *fin-de-siècle* virtuoso»<sup>48</sup>. The press also noted Sarasate's interest in Hungarian music, when he sent a letter from Paris to the composer Jenő Hubay (1858-1937) asking for an arrangement of his *Tavern Scenes*:

Sarasate's letter to Jenő Hubay. Pablo Sarasate, the famous Spanish violinist, heard some extracts of Hungarian dreams from Jenő Hubay's *Tavern Scenes* at a concert in Paris the other day. He liked the composition so much that he obtained it immediately and then he asked his Hungarian colleague in a letter to send him the orchestral accompaniment without a dulcimer, because in Spain there was no dulcimer. Sarasate asked Hubay to replace the dulcimer solo with a harp. Sarasate wrote in his letter that Hubay idealised Hungarian music in the *Tavern Scenes*<sup>49</sup>.

In 1905 and 1906, he played his last concerts in Budapest, after years of absence because the younger violinists «had kicked him off the circuit»<sup>50</sup>. The interesting white-haired master was then applauded «in memory of the old glory he was».

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<sup>45</sup>. On the violin players' virtuosity and its relationship with the incredible Gypsy virtuosos, see: PIOTROWSKA 2021.

<sup>46</sup>. *EGER – HETILAP* 1877, p. 26.

<sup>47</sup>. *MAGYAR* 1877, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup>. *PESTI NAPLÓ* 1893, pp. 5-6.

<sup>49</sup>. «Sarasate levele Hubay Jenőhöz. Sarasate Pablo, a hírneves spanyol hegedűs, a minap egy párisi hangversenyen hallotta Hubay Jenő Csárdajelenetek című magyar ábrándjainak egy pár részletét. A szerzemény annyira megtetszett neki, hogy rögtön megszerezte és most levélben szólította föl magyar kollégáját: küldje meg neki a hozzá való zenekari kíséretet, cimbalom nélkül, mert Spanyolországban nem kapható cimbalom. Sarasate arra kéri Hnbayt, hogy a cimbalom-szólót hárfával helyettesítse. Sarasate azt írja levelében, hogy Hubay a Csárdajelenetekben valósággal idealizálta a magyar zenét». *PESTI NAPLÓ* 1894, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup>. *PESTI NAPLÓ* 1905, pp. 13-14.

Sarasate's myth was so durable in Hungarian culture that in 1941 a libretto for a great operetta in three acts by András Hindy was entitled *The Violin is Singing*, set in Madrid in 1870, starring Sarasate and the Spanish Queen Elizabeth II<sup>51</sup>.

Another great Spanish violinist and conductor, 'Enrico' Fernández Arbós (1863-1939) was first known in Hungary for his music: a throbbing «Spanyol tríó»<sup>52</sup>, which was interrupted by rapturous applause when played by Hungarian players either in concerts or in chamber music exams in the Budapest Academy in 1904. The Hungarian press then pointed out that this Spanish dance piece was «sweet, fiery, noble, and heady like Xerez wine»<sup>53</sup>.

Thirty years later, in 1934, Arbós arrived in Budapest for the first time to conduct a Spanish official concert to commemorate the anniversary of the Spanish republic, being received and accommodated in the Spanish Embassy there<sup>54</sup>. He was introduced as «the Spanish Jenő Hubay» by the press. Jenő Hubay (1858-1937) — the same person whom Sarasate had asked for an arrangement of his work in 1894 — was a Hungarian violinist and composer. Still, he was a long-standing close friend of Arbós, dating back to the time when both of them had been violin students in Brussels 45 years earlier<sup>55</sup>. Hubay had introduced Arbós' trio to Hungarian audiences at the end of the 19th century, and when they met in Budapest in 1934 he was still playing his violin<sup>56</sup>.

Arbós stated that Spanish musical life was highly developed — promoted by the new government — and that Hungarian composers were very well-known in Spain, conducting a programme in Madrid himself: a programme which included Bartók, Dohnányi, Hubay, and Kodály. The Hungarian press also highlighted his long career as a musician, over 65 years, remarking that he lived in 'his own Street' in Madrid — a street with his name — which was an honour which had been granted on the occasion of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. A beautiful Fernández Arbós sketch by Sipos Béla was also published — ILL. 5.

Once again, the reviews of this Spanish official concert — including works by Esplá, E. Halffter, Sanjuán, Falla and Albéniz — focused on the similarities between Spanish and Hungarian musical history and musical evolution: the presence of virtuoso players, the richness of folkloric dance and music, and above all, the folkloric restoration to preserve national music, at the turn of the century:

<sup>51</sup>. ANDRÁS 1941.

<sup>52</sup>. It refers to the *Tres piezas originales en Estilo Español*, Op. 1, for Piano Trio (1885). *Bolero*, *Habanera* and *Seguidillas gitanas*.

<sup>53</sup>. *BUDAPESTI NAPLÓ* 1898, p. 8; *JÓZSEF FŐHERCZEG* 1898, p. 15; *ZENELAP* 1904, p. 7. To listen to the «Spanyol trio» see FERNÁNDEZ ARBÓS 2018.

<sup>54</sup>. *NEMZETI UJSÁG* 1934, p. 11.

<sup>55</sup>. *MAGYARORSZÁG* 1934, p. 10.

<sup>56</sup>. The rapturous playing of Hubay can be seen at HUBAY 1935.



*Enrico Fernandez Arbós  
(Sipos Béla rajza)*

ILL. 5: 'Enrico Fernandez Arbós. (Sipos Béla rajza) [Drawing by Béla Sipos]', in: *MAGYARORSZÁG* 1934.

Only recently did one of the most outstanding representatives of Spanish art, Pablo Casals, express that there is something in common in the music of all peoples. We would add the following to this: if one looks at the history of the development of Spanish and Hungarian music, one finds some strikingly related traits, especially in the last century. The sympathy that the Spanish audience always has for our virtuosos who perform there has long been mutual; Manén, Casals, Fleta or Cassadó are just as warmly welcomed here as are the works by de Falla (recently in the opera house) or that prominent representative of Spanish music, Enrique Fernández Arbós, the conductor of today's best orchestra concert at the Academy of Music.

Few peoples can boast of such an ancient musical culture as the Spaniards. But what is particularly important to them is the deep love they have for music. As a result, their folk music is particularly diverse and rich. The Spanish dance, like the Hungarian, still roams the whole world. [...]

As everywhere else, the Spanish folk music of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had to give way to international European currents. There was a break in the great musical traditions. Rossinism, German Romantics, Debussy, Wagner, R. Strauss supplanted Spanish national music for a long time. So, the appearance of the great folklorists — as in our country — was a cultural-historical necessity when Eslava, Pedrell and his pupils Mitjana and Anglés paved the way for a folkloric restoration. This movement, which began 60 or 70 years ago, is also currently reflected in the revival of old church music, in the care and in the systematic collection of folk music. The collection of folk songs of the Catalans is currently about 20,000 melodies! But the collection



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continues diligently. So that's where we find the most obvious historical analogy to our music<sup>57</sup>.

As mentioned here, we also find these ideas about the folkloric restoration and the superior richness of the Spanish popular song among the Romany nations, when the press referred to «one of the most outstanding representatives of Spanish art», Pablo Casals, the great cellist who played regularly in Budapest from 1910 over decades. He was introduced to Hungarian audiences as the filler of the great void Sarasate left behind with his death, re-establishing «the declining glory of Spanish performance art»<sup>58</sup>. Furthermore, he is portrayed — along with Debussy — as a foreign artist interested in gypsy music, going on to explain how Casals went to the restaurant of an upscale hotel to listen to Béla Radics band, and how the sad Hungarian songs impressed him vividly, praising Radics for his playing<sup>59</sup>. Almost twenty years later, Casals himself confessed that he loved Hungarian music «infinitely», frequently not going home after his concerts but staying in a coffee-shop or restaurant until five in the morning — when everybody was already at home — enjoying the gypsies, and maturing a «grotesquely sounding thought»:

You know, I've had the feeling for a long time that there are some Hungarian features in Bach. [...] Then one day I tried it myself. I took the cello from the gypsy in the band. I played a Bach prelude to them. It was in Debrecen, at about four o'clock

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<sup>57</sup>. «Erst unlängst äußerte sich hier einer der hervorragendsten Vertreter der spanischen Kunst, Pablo Casals, daß der Musik aller Völker etwas Gemeinsames innewohnt. Wir würden dies durch folgendes ergänzen: wenn man die Entwicklungsgeschichte der spanischen und der ungarischen Musik betrachtet, so findet man manche auffallend verwandte Züge, besonders im letzten Jahrhundert. Die Sympathie, die das spanische Publikum unseren dort konzertierenden Virtuosen stets entgegenbringt, beruht längst auf Gegenseitigkeit, denn Manen, Casals, Fleta oder Cassado werden bei uns ebenso herzlich begrüßt, wie die Werke von de Falla (erst unlängst im Opernhaus) oder der prominente Repräsentant der spanischen Musik, Enrique Fernandez Arbós, der Leiter des heutigen Orchesterkonzertes an der Musikakademie. / Wenige Völker können sich rühmen, eine solch alte Musikkultur aufzuweisen wie die Spanier. Was aber bei ihnen besonders wichtig ist, die tiefe Liebe, die man dort zur Musik liebt. Demzufolge ist ihre Volksmusik besonders mannigfaltig und reich. Der spanische Tanz wie der ungarische durchwandert noch jetzt die ganze Welt. [...] / Wie überall, so mußte auch die spanische Volksmusik des 19. Jahrhunderts den internationalen europäischen Strömungen den Platz räumen. Es erfolgte ein Bruch in den großen Musiktraditionen. Rossinismus, deutsche Romantiker, Debussy, Wagner, R. Strauß verdrängten auf lange Zeit die spanische Nationalmusik. So war also das Auftreten der großen Folkloristen — wie bei uns — eine kulturhistorische Notwendigkeit, als Eslava, Pedrell und seine Schüler Mitjana und Angles einer folkloristischen Restauration den Weg ebneten. Diese Bewegung, vor 60 bis 70 Jahren begonnen, äußert sich auch derzeit in der Wiederbelebung der alten Kirchenmusik, in der Pflege und in der systematischen Sammlung der Volksmusik. Die Volksliedersammlung der Katalanen beträgt zurzeit etwa 20.000 Melodien! Die Sammlung dauert aber emsig fort. Da finden wir also am naheliegendsten die historische Analogie zu unserer Musik». *PESTER LLOYD* 1934, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup>. *MAGYARORSZÁG* 1911, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup>. *BUDAPESTI HIRLAP* 1910, p. 6.



ILL. 6: 'Pablo Casals talks with Béla Bartók', in: *As EZT* 1930.

in the morning. But don't think badly of me, I never drink, I played the prelude completely soberly, I haunted myself with the band. It was one of my most beautiful musical experiences<sup>60</sup>.

Apart from Gypsy musicians, Casals was declared to be «in constant contact with the excellences of the Hungarian music world»<sup>61</sup>, considering Jenő Hubay to be a very great artist, and being highly appreciative of Ernő Dohnányi (1877-1960). As a consequence, Hubay's compositions were often played by Casals' orchestra in Barcelona, and he often played Dohnányi's compositions, particularly the *Sonata*, one of his favourite closing works. In 1930 Casals played Bartók's *Cello Rhapsody* for the first time. The composer — although just returned from a London tour — wanted to be present at this concert when the world's best cellist interpreted his piece of music, and the headline was «Casals won!»<sup>62</sup>.

On the occasion of his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, Casals was considered «the greatest cellist of our time», successful in restoring the Spanish musical tradition even above the composers themselves:

The greatest cellist of our time will turn 50 this year. These fifty years coincide with the musical renewal of the Spanish nation, which began with the performance

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<sup>60</sup>. *PESTI NAPLÓ* 1929, p. 8.

<sup>61</sup>. *PRÁGAI MAGYAR* 1933, p. 4.

<sup>62</sup>. *As EZT* 1930, p. 11.

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of Felipe Pedrell, an avid composer and scholar of the Spanish musical tradition and folklore. However, the unexpected boom in new Spanish music did not fully live up to its promise. Yet the popular music that Pedrell dug out of obscurity gave great national ideals to Spanish musicians, and the Spanish folk song is known to be the richest of the folk music of all Romany nations. The new Spanish composition (although Albéniz, Granados, and especially Falla gave it a prestigious place in European music life) was unable to develop the radically national, most valuable germs of their discovered traditions.

And strangely, where composers failed, a performer succeeded. Yet the craft of the performing artist is more international in nature than that of the composer, since as an interpreter he must embrace the works of foreign nations step by step, not to mention that national performing arts can normally only develop under the influence of national composition. However, the Spanish nation refuted this rule with its great son, Pablo Casals. In Pablo Casals, we do indeed find more ancient Spanish features than all his composer comrades combined. P. G. Morales, one of the famous music aestheticians of the Spaniards, rightly calls Casals a spiritual relative of Velázquez, Victoria, Zurbarán, and Herrera. There is something of the great artist about the terrible imagination and immense temperament of these great geniuses, the manifestation of which is always the result of the work of artistic moderation, of realistic purity. Unlimited dreaminess and wonderful moderation go hand in hand in Casals' art<sup>63</sup>.

### TWO COUNTRIES BEHIND EUROPE

Although Gypsyess has traditionally been considered the most powerful cultural connection, musical encounters between Hungary and Spain have to be studied in a wider frame

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<sup>63</sup>. «Korunk legnagyobb gordonkaművésze ebben az esztendőben tölti be ötvenedik életévét. Ez az ötven esztendő összeesik a spanyol nemzet zenei megújulásával, mely Felipe Pedrellnek, a lelkes zeneszerzőnek és a spanyol zenei tradíció és folklóre tudós kutatójának fellépésével kezdődött. Az új spanyol muzsika váratlan fellendülése azonban nem váltotta be teljesen a hozzája fűzött reménységeket. Pedig a mult, melyet Pedrell kiásott a feledés homályából, nagy nemzeti idálokat adott a spanyol muzsikuskoknak, a spanyol népdal pedig, mint ismeretes, valamennyi román nemzet népzeneje között a leggazdagabb. Az új spanyol zeneszerzés (bár Albeniz, Granados s különösen de Falla rangos helyet biztosított neki Európa zeneéletében) nem tudta kifejleszteni felfedezett tradícióinak gyökeresen nemzeti, legértékesebb csírait. / És különös: ami a zeneszerzőknek nem sikerült, az sikerült egy előadóművésznek. Pedig az előadóművész mestersége internacionálisabb jellegű, mint a zeneszerzőé, hiszen mint interpretátornak lépten-nyomon idegen nemzetek alkotásait is magáévá kell tennie, nem is szólva arról, hogy nemzeti előadóművészet rendszeren csak nemzeti zeneszerzés hatása alatt fejlődhetik ki. A spanyol nemzet azonban nagy fiával, Casals Pablóval rácáfolt erre a szabályra. Casals Pablóban valóban több ősi spanyol vonást találunk, mint összes komponistakortársaiban együttvéve. P. G. Morales, a hispánok egyik neves zeneesztétikusa méltán nevezi Casalsot Velasquez, Victoria, Zurbaran és Herrera szellemi rokonának. A nagy művészen van valami ezeknek a nagy génuszoknak rettenetes erejű fantáziájából, hatalmas temperamentumból, melynek megnyilatkozása mindig a művészi mérséklet, a realisztikus tisztaság munkájának eredménye. Korlátlan álmodóképeség és csodálatos mértékletesség nyujtanak egymásnak kezét Casals művészetében is». *PESTI NAPLÓ* 1926, p. 11.

of reference, including the assimilation of Spanish literature into the Hungarian tradition from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Cervantes, Calderón, Lope de Vega, Echegaray and Alarcón are only a few examples of well-known Spanish literary authors who formed part of the increasing national culture of Hungary.

The presence of Zarzuela and Spanish musicians in Hungary reveals that an intense cultural relationship between Hungary and Spain existed since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Hungarian interest in Spanish culture, specifically in its theatre and other literary repertoires, clearly influenced how highly Spanish music and musicians were appreciated by Hungarians. As for zarzuela, the passion for French and Viennese operetta coupled with the exotic Spanish flavour made possible the success of the zarzuela's reception in Hungary.

The modern Spanish composers were also introduced into the Hungarian musical scene, but performers — particularly string players such as Sarasate, Arbós and Casals — have been much more valued as champions of the Spanish musical tradition based on popular music. Similarities are found between this folkloric restoration in Spain — Pedrell, Anglés — and Hungary — Bartók, Kodály — which have been seen as the salvation of both countries' national music from modern international currents.

Ultimately, these encounters provoked important discussions about Gypsiness and popular music, operetta and zarzuela, and nationalism and politics throughout the music of two countries from outside the European mainstream: two countries behind Europe.

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