

Dear workshop attendees,

These are the first pages that I have written for my dissertation. I intend them for the first chapter, but they are not the whole chapter. This is why the text ends sort of abruptly – chapter is not finished.

The dissertation will go from around 1785 to 1808. The rest of the chapters are yet to be defined. They will explore discourses about music (criticism, travel accounts, medical treatises, Iriarte's poem *La música*) that show the struggle of Spaniards to define a collective self for themselves and for the rest of Europe.

Many thanks for taking the time to read and help!

In this dissertation I will argue that performance and criticism of theater music in Madrid formed a vital part of the boom in what Jürgen Habermas has defined as the “sphere” of public opinion in the last two decades of the eighteenth century.

MADRID, 1786-1787

Critics vs. Musicians: El Censor and El músico censor

My initial motivation to undertake musical research in this time and place came from two discourses about music printed in Madrid in 1786. The first text lacks a title and it was published in the periodical *El Censor* (Madrid, 1781-1787) as Discourse 97 on March 23, under the pseudonym Simplicio Greco y Lira (Simplicius Graecus et Lyra). The second text is titled *El músico censor de El Censor no músico*. The Royal Chapel musician Manuel Cavaza published it under the pseudonym Lucio Vero Hispano on May 6 of the same year. Cavaza disputed *El Censor's* arguments from the point of view of an offended professional musician who feels left out of the public discussion about the nature and function of music. Cavaza felt threatened by the anonymous Simplicio Greco y Lira, who wrote about music without the technical knowledge of practical musicians. Cavaza sensed that the authority to write about music was slipping out of the hands of “the body of music professors,” whether “priests, laymen, teachers, pupils,” out of

the field of art and science and into the field of satire (2). In his opinion only music maestros could *cancel* music and critics did not know what they were talking about, hence the title *El músico censor del censor no músico*.

On his part, the anonymous author of Discourse 97 of *El Censor* pleaded for Spanish musicians to return to nature and simplicity (hence “Simplicio”).¹ Following the principles of literary *neoclásicos* like Ignacio de Luzán and Tomás de Iriarte, Simplicio Greco abhorred baroque technicalities, specifically the contrapuntal forms that musicians like Cavaza prized in church music. He invoked the music of the ancient Greeks (hence “Greco”) as the only model worth of emulation, possibly with the exception of plainchant. Speech and prosody, he claims, must rule any and all music in order to move the human heart. Artifice, on the contrary, diverts the spectator from affective experience to the skill of the artist.² Discourse 97 forms part of a wider critique of artistic practices in Spain. The few anonymous authors that wrote for *El Censor* consistently denounced the backwardness of Spaniards, often through satire.

The most striking feature of this debate is, on the one hand, how liberally Simplicio Greco y Lira referred to Greek music, and on the other, how disparate the two discourses were. Simplicio Greco probably wanted to respond to ideas circulating in Spain that the music of ancient Greece did not measure up as a model for European music because it was too simple (Censor, 529).³ Since he did not have access to any ancient Greek music, he speculated on the basis of parallels with other arts, and what he perceived as the musicality of Greek language as manifested in theater, poetry, and oratory. He was not troubled by the lack of information about ancient Greek music because he cared about expression and affect that can only be achieved through philosophy. In his view, philosophers (not musicians, who are “mere doers, people

¹ “The fine letters, and arts, according to philosophers, lose from their beauty all that they stray from simplicity.” (“Las bellas Letras, y Artes, según el sentir de los Filósofos, pierden de su belleza todo quanto se extravían de la sencillez.”) (Discurso XCVII, 526-7).

² “The poet’s object, and that of the orator, the architect, the painter, the statue maker, is to pleasantly move our heart toward the object that they present to us, and not toward the hand that offers it.” (“El objeto de un Poëta, y de un Orador, el de un Arquitecto, un Pintor, y Estatuario es el de mover agradablemente nuestro corazón ácia el objeto que nos presentan, no ácia la mano que lo ofrece.”) (Idem, 528).

³ Simplicio Greco does not mention where these ideas about Greek music come from, and only states that they are “common opinion.”

without philosophy”) must rescue Spanish music from retrograde canons and other baroqueries; music is about thinking and feeling.⁴ This was the tipping point that triggered Cavaza’s lengthy response; he could not understand how somebody other than a practical musician could write about music.⁵ Cavaza ruled out any possible comparison between ancient Greek and current music because nobody had access to scores; music is about seeing and hearing.

Why did the author of Discourse 97 feel the need to write a critique of music? It is true that criticism was his *raison d’être*, and he wrote extensively about theater and other literary genres. He also criticized and censored social mores, and overall wanted to push Spain into a more progressive mentality, whatever that meant for him/them in particular (*El Censor* had at least a couple of authors, as José Miguel Caso explains). The agenda of the author is quite clearly neoclassical along the lines of Luzán’s premises. Like Luzán, the author of Discourse 97 derided the literary Culteranismo (or Gongorismo) of the seventeenth century because, in this style, ornamentation obscured meaning.⁶ For him, baroque counterpoint paralleled the syntactic labyrinths and the petty rules of Culteranismo, an altogether “barbaric” style that preceded “philosophical discovery of the most sublime principles of [art].”⁷

Simplicio Greco drew freely from sources other than Luzán’s neoclassicism, even possibly from Rousseau-derived ideas, but the connection between Simplicio and Rousseau is not explicit. The emphasis he puts on ancient Greek and the melodious prosody of the language remind us of Rousseau’s theories of language and music. For instance, Simplicio considered melody, rather than harmony, to be the foundation of musical expression. He denounces the

⁴ “If our philosophers studied music like the ancients did, it [music] would not be stagnated and tyrannized by the whims of mere doers, people without philosophy.” “From all of this I conclude that we will never know the good music until it be examined, and practiced, by philosophers who reduce it to the primitive philosophical simplicity of the Greek.” (“Si nuestros Filósofos estudiáran la Musica como los antiguos, no se vería ésta estancada y tiranizada por el capricho de meros executores, gente sin filosofía...” “De todo esto concluyo que jamás conoceremos la buena Musica hasta tanto que sea examinada, y practicada por Filósofos que la reduzcan á la primitiva sencillez filosófica de los Griegos.”) (Idem, 544/546).

⁵ Discourse 97 of *El Censor* takes 24 pages, whereas Cavaza’s reply is close to 200 pages.

⁶ Culteranismo found expression in prose, theater, poetry, and sermons. The author of Discourse 97, like the Spanish neoclassicists, posits sixteenth-century authors as role models for eighteenth-century aesthetics. “Cotejemos un Sermon de los que se predicaban en el siglo pasado [XVII], con uno de Fr. Luis de Granada, por no hablar ahora de lo antiguo; pero sobre todo comparemos un Poëma de pies forzados, paranomastico, acróstico, laberintico, equívoco, trilingüe y retrogrado con uno sencillo de Garcilaso.” (Discurso XCVII, 527-8).

⁷ Idem, 526.

musicians of his time because they “take harmony to be the main part of music, when it is but a palatableness of second order that must be subordinated to, and serve the first one [melody]. Melody on its own is capable of all the merit.”⁸We can compare this statement to Rousseau’s in *Examination of Rameau’s Two Principles*: “The most beautiful chords, like the most beautiful colors, can convey to the senses a pleasant sensation and nothing more.... Melody is in music what design is in Painting, harmony produces merely the effect of colors.”⁹ Of course Rousseau was attacking Rameau, whereas Simplicio disproved of seventeenth-century aesthetic preferences. All differences acknowledged, both authors coincided that music is meant to move the passions. Yet the most unusual characteristic of Simplicio Greco’s discourse is the way he theorizes. He writes almost like a Renaissance man, searching for a kind of music that harmonizes better with human nature.¹⁰

The Theater of Los Caños del Peral

Beyond his philosophical concerns, the author behind Simplicio Greco y Lira may have been aware of a major upcoming event in the musical life of Madrid. By February of 1786, the Junta de Hospitales of Madrid declared that they intended to reopen the Teatro de Los Caños del Peral for the performance of Italian opera.¹¹ The revenues would go to the city hospitals, and Madrid audiences would once again enjoy the musical spectacle that was sweeping across Europe. The Junta de Hospitales had been studying the viability of such an enterprise, and they officially petitioned the lease of the theater from the reigning king Charles III (r. 1759-1788) the same day that *El Censor* published Discourse 97.¹²

⁸ Idem, 541.

⁹ Rousseau, ed. John T. Scott, 279.

¹⁰ “Is art anything but observation of nature to yield, easily and properly, an effect that delights the intelligent one at the same time that it pleases the multitude?” (“¿Es otra cosa el arte que la observación de la naturaleza para producir fácilmente y con propiedad, un efecto que al mismo tiempo que encante al inteligente agrada á la multitud?”) (Discurso, 545).

¹¹ The theater first opened in 1737, specifically for Italian opera

¹² The King approved the petition on June 4, 1786 (Boyd and Carreras, 41).

The reopening of Los Caños del Peral kindled public life in Madrid and stimulated discussions. I can only hypothesize that Simplicio Greco y Lira knew about the new theater, but others continued to write about music in the newspapers. Starting in mid-January 1787, the *Diario de Madrid* published a series of articles about opera, this time clearly aimed at preparing the Madrid audiences for the reopening of the theater on the 20th of January. The author was Juan Bautista Montaldi, a Genovese banker residing in Madrid. The first article (January 17) recounted past instances of Italian opera performance in the city, in particular those at Los Caños del Peral in 1738 and at the Coliseo del Buen Retiro from 1747 to 1758.¹³ Thereafter, noted the author, opera had been performed only at the *reales sitios*. Audiences anticipated the new theater all the more because they had not had access to a public opera performance in decades.

The author of the articles about opera in the *Diario de Madrid* notes that Charles III closed the city *coliseos* (theaters) in 1777, when opera stopped for good. He is talking about the Coliseos de La Cruz and El Príncipe, the two civic theaters in Madrid during the second half of the eighteenth century.¹⁴ Every evening at the coliseos included music, whether in the main play or in the intermissions. The city employed all the theater workers, including writers and composers, distributed in two companies, one for each coliseo. Actresses and actors, known as *cómicos*, musicians, composers, writers, and even the wardrobe keeper reported to city authorities, and ultimately to the king. All of the *cómicos* and *cómicas* were Spanish, and they performed all musical and spoken theater in Spanish, with isolated exceptions. The new theater of Los Caños del Peral, by contrast, would import an Italian opera company, impresario included.

¹³ This second period was the Golden Age of Farinelli in Madrid, under the patronage of Barbara of Portugal. Charles III dismissed Farinelli upon his arrival to the throne in 1759. Nonetheless, the powerful Count of Aranda consolidated a double theater company for the royal sites, with one section for spoken French theater, and one for Italian musical theater (Xoán M. Carreira in Boyd and Carreras, 35).

¹⁴ Cofradías from Madrid started out these theaters as open-air corrales since the late-sixteenth century, but in the eighteenth century they passed to city administration. The Coliseo del Príncipe was rebuilt in 1745, and the Coliseo de la Cruz in 1737 (Varey, Shergold y Davis, *Fuentes XII*, 43).

Unlike Simplicio Greco y Lira, Montaldi had a personal interest in educating his readers and prime them to get excited about the new opera theater.¹⁵ The Genovese banker would become the first administrator of Los Caños del Peral.¹⁶ He must have been aware that the coliseos were successful, and that some theatergoers might mistrust/be suspicious of theater in Italian. Therefore, he began by reminding them that Italian opera was the preferred spectacle of queens and kings in Madrid throughout the century. He continued the following day writing about a general history of opera, with emphasis on Italy and France. He protects opera against possible attacks from the neoclásicos, who dismissed any non-diegetic theater in music on the basis of verisimilitude.

In spite of their differences, both Simplicio Greco and Montaldi appealed to the primacy of words over music to comply with the neoclassical rules of verisimilitude, but both tried to validate song. Simplicio lamented that the music of the church with its counterpoint and Latin texts obscured the poetry as much as a da capo aria with its repetitions. In his view, virtuosity impaired sacred and theater music because it favored ornamentation over declamation. Montaldi admitted that opera buffa broke the rules of dramatic poetry, but proposed Metastasian opera as a model for musical drama in which music heightens poetry.

Once both authors established that music should follow speech and not the other way around, they faced the problem of language. The issue of words and music preoccupied writers and men of letters, but the issue of language touched the sensitive terrain of Spanish identity for the general audiences. Critics had to resolve whether and how music sung in a foreign language could move the affects of performers and listener. Simplicio Greco answered no, composers and performers deformed sacred music because they did not understand Latin.¹⁷ Montaldi chose to flatter his readership and affirmed that no language other than Italian suits music drama, except

¹⁵ His name was Juan Baptista (Bautista) Montaldi.

¹⁶ Together with Felipe Bartolomey (see Carreira, 44).

¹⁷ "How many Latin compositions are there among us by people who ignore this language, and at the most, have only an idea that a Miserere ought to be sad, a Gloria merry, and on Christmas day everything ought to be festive, even the Kyries, the meaning of which they ignore?" ("¿Quántas composiciones latinas hay entre nosotros de personas que ignoran esta lengua, y quando mas, solo tienen idea de que un Miserere ha de ser triste, un Gloria alegre, y que en un día de Navidad todo ha de ser festivo, aunque sean los *Kyries*, que no saben lo que significan?") (Discurso, 534).

Spanish. Neither of the two wanted to be accused of xenophilia, either for Greek or for Italian, so they quoted the same authority in matters of musical aesthetics, the poem *La Música* by Spanish writer Tomás de Iriarte, first published in 1781. Manuel Cavaza did the same in his lengthy reply to *El Censor*. The authors of *El Correo de los Ciegos* decided to help audiences appreciate and like opera by offering to publish synopses of the Italian operas, in view that most of those who attended the opera seria *Medonte* (Metastasio/Giuseppe Sarti) at Los Caños del Peral could not understand the plot.¹⁸

In addition to Montaldi's articles in *El Diario de Madrid* and to the synopses in *El Correo*, audiences could now read the Spanish translation of Francesco Algarotti's *Saggi sopra l'opera in musica*. The only Spanish edition was issued in January 1787, twenty-four years after its Italian counterpart and just in time for the opening of the Teatro de los Caños del Peral. The *Diario* announced the publication with a brief summary on January 27; the author of the *Diario* article calls for audiences to read Algarotti's work in order to "contribute to the reformation of national [Spanish] theater." Like the preceding articles in the *Diario*, this one reserves a final comment for dance and pantomime as a constitutive part of Italian opera.¹⁹ Several copies of Algarotti's book in Italian survive in Spanish libraries as testimony that at least some people had access to it before 1787, but the Spanish edition was intended to reach a broader audience. The title page specifies that the *Saggi* were translated into Castilian "for the instruction of those who wish to attend the new Italian Theater." The pro-Italian opera articles in the main newspapers and the translation of Algarotti demonstrate that the performances at Los Caños del Peral were initially embraced, and that several powerful men tried to conciliate the project of the new theater with the royal interests.

The efforts to educate the prospective attendees for the new theater follow the Bourbon project to modernize and cosmopolitanize Spain. A group of nobles had remained interested in

¹⁸ *El Correo de los ciegos de Madrid*, no. 35 p. 140, February 6, 1787. They included the plot of the ballets for the intermissions as well.

¹⁹ The *Ensayo sobre la ópera* was advertised again in the *Gaceta de Madrid* on February 2, 1787, and April 8, 1788.

financing opera even when it was only available at the Royal Sites. Several of them gathered in 1786 to form a council that would decide the matters of the opera, supervise the impresario and all monetary operations, and function as an intermediary with the king.. This council, along with the impresario and administrators formulated the enterprise in terms of the Bourbonic rhetoric of progress, civilization, and Europeanization. Many of the top-tier noblemen had traveled to other European cities, and even those wealthy Madrileños who had not sojourned abroad knew that opera, more than Italian, was a European form of entertainment. Madrid could not lag behind other European capitals.²⁰ The aristocrats in the committee for Los Caños del Peral, as well as the authors of *El Diario* and *El Correo*, did not initially perceive Italian opera as a threat to Spanish identity, but instead as an asset that could advance Spain into the first ranks of Europe. In spite of their differences, all three Madrid periodicals so far cited (*El Censor*, *Diario*, and *El Correo de los Ciegos*) exhorted Madrid press readers to become worthy European citizens while remaining Spanish. This balance between European and Spanish guided the efforts of politicians and men of letters in the late phase of the Spanish Enlightenment.

The Bourbon project to keep Spain as a competitive state can be understood as one of Spanish Europeanization, especially under Charles III. Their perspective asserted Spain as a constitutive element of Europe in its capacity as the metropolis of an empire, but also as a bastion for culture and civilization. The Bourbon regime needed to convince Spaniards that they could and should be a proud part of Europe, and they needed printed and oral public media to do so. The government pursued Spanish Europeanization by regulating and by presenting regulations framed in specific forms of discourse that morphed continuously in their details, yet preserved the overall rhetoric of progress and national prowess. Intellectuals, patrons configured the regulatory discourse through books, pamphlets, periodicals, and theater.

²⁰ A letter published in the *Correo de los Ciegos* on April 18, 1787, begins the description of the new theater saying that it was rehabilitated “to fill the void that foreigners noticed as soon as they got to know the [Madrid] court.” (*Correo* no. 51, 206).

Regulatory discourse reached Madrilenians *viva voce* and in written formats, ranging from edicts with numbered lists of norms to elaborate symbolic representation. In the articles about opera in el *Diario de Madrid* surrounding the reopening of Los Caños del Peral, Montaldi adopts an informational tone punctuated with ethical hints. He summarizes the history of the genre in a way that construes opera as a valuable asset to covet. The same *Diario* printed on April 16-17, 1787 an edict announcing the rules and prices for the food and beverages sold at Los Caños del Peral. The edict intends to regulate the behavior of opera attendees as much as possible “to avoid excess and confusion.”²¹ This text epitomizes extent to which Bourbon regulators tried to micro-manage the attitudes of Madrileños because it dictates how they must carry themselves while they socialize in the refreshment area. Members of the audience were commanded to sit at the tables just to eat and drink, and forbidden to smoke, sing, smoke, or whistle; their gestures and conversation had to manifest decorum. . It is unlikely that spectators abided by such minute rules, yet the document reveals the Bourbonic ideal of civilized entertainment and thus complements the educational articles by Montaldi.

The range of discursive modes that demanded a more civilized Spain exploded in the last decades of the eighteenth century. The diversity of voices exasperated readers, spectators, and musicians like Manuel Cavaza. From the written testimonies it seems like suddenly everyone had the right to say something, which disrupted authority. Cavaza responded angrily to Discourse 97 of *El Censor* precisely over the authority to define and evaluate music

Censorship went not only from press to music, but the other way around as well. A letter published in February, 1787 in *El Correo de los Ciegos* complains about theater performers on stage bashing critics, who in turn complained about the comedies programmed in Madrid theaters. The anonymous correspondent refers to a *tonadilla* performed during the second intermission of a comedy at the Coliseo de La Cruz. In the tonadilla, he writes, “the *cómicos*

²¹ Yolanda F. Acker, *Música y danza* 67.

[actor-singers] insist on continuing in their gibberish despite all that writers say.”²² Tonadillas were short, sung intermission numbers that often discussed the current state of affairs. The actor-singers of tonadillas often represented themselves and addressed their audiences in second person. In this particular case, the cómicos blamed critics that published *papeles sueltos* (pamphlets) because they decried the quality of the comedies yet offered no solution – much talking, not enough doing.²³ The author of the letter to the *Correo de los Ciegos* protests that it is the critic’s duty to denounce, the playwright’s duty to write better comedies, and the actors’ duty to learn a diverse repertory. Like in the controversy between Simplicio Greco vs. Manuel Cavaza, the rivalry erupts between the sayer (the critic) and the doer (the performer/author).

I consider the exchange between stage music and printed discourse to be characteristic of the last two decades of the eighteenth century. There had been tonadillas and sainetes where cómicos questioned critics before, but not frequent open-letter responses like the ones we find around 1786-87. The tonadilla *La disputa de los teatros* that inflamed the anonymous correspondent of the *Correo* in 1787 was composed by Blas Laserna probably in 1784, while working for the theater company of Eusebio Rivera, operating at the Coliseo del Príncipe.²⁴ His colleague at the Coliseo de la Cruz, Pablo Esteve composed the music and lyrics for a tonadilla titled *La crítica del teatro* in 1782, and Blas Laserna also authored *Los quejosos del teatro* (The complainers of the theater) in 1785. Earlier, in 1776, José Ibáñez wrote the sainete *La disputa del teatro*.

Yet it was in 1787 that the editors of the *Correo de los Ciegos* directly engaged theater employees with press criticism. They asked the Madrid *Corregidor* (mayor) José de Armona to hand them the texts of the tonadillas and sainetes performed at La Cruz and El Príncipe “to expand moral satire, which will result in the benefit of the audience, and will be useful to

²² *Correo* no. 39, p. 156.

²³ The author of the letter specifies that the tonadilla was performed with the comedy *Los Pardos de Aragón*. Andioc and Coulon’s *Cartelera* does not provide the title for the second tonadilla in this function.. It is possible that the tonadilla was *La disputa de los teatros*, unfortunately lost.

²⁴ BNE Mss/14016/3-118, Papeles referentes a los teatros de Madrid.

[theater] companies.”²⁵ The *autores* (administrators) of each of the two city coliseos protested in rage that the *Correo* editors in reality intended to profit from selling the texts of tonadillas. *Autores* Eusebio Rivera and Manuel Martínez further argued that once audiences could read the lyrics, they would stop attending the theater, or worse, they would count on too many arguments to criticize the performers. Rivera and Martínez claimed to be defending the interests of the performers, who would suffer at the expense of an excessively informed audience. In their view, the printed texts would nullify the novelty of theater, and “any blind man singing on a corner would claim to be better than the actors.”²⁶ The Madrid theater companies have done well, the *autores* said, without the new enlightened editors! (*ylustrados editores*). They sensed that the press critics interfered with the success of theater employees, and defended them accordingly. The dispute illustrates again the rivalry between sayers and doers.

Among all the periodical publications in Madrid, *El Censor* may have incited the most controversies. Manuel Cavaza, “El músico censor,” was not the only one to take offense from *El Censor*’s discourses. Several authors wrote apologies for the Spanish nation in reply to *El Censor*. Apologetics as a genre existed of course since antiquity, but around the years 1786-1787 apologies multiplied, partly due to the intense criticism of *El Censor*. For example *Tabla, o Breve relación apologetica del mérito de los españoles en las ciencias, las artes, y todo lo demás* by Santos Díez González (1786) addresses the foreigners who scorn Spain as much as the nationals who insult their own *patria*. The periodical *El Apologista Universal* appeared between the years 1786-1788 with the main purpose of counteracting *El Censor*.²⁷

Prominent among late-eighteenth century apologies was Juan Pablo Forner’s *Oración apologetica por la España y su mérito literario* (1786). The *Oración apologetica* steered the apologetic genre in Spain to a national defense against European powers like England and

²⁵ Sainetes were also intermission acts, but predominantly spoken, in opposition to tonadillas, which were predominantly sung.

²⁶ *Idem*, 183, letter from Eusebio Rivera and Manuel Martínez to Juan Laví y Zavala. The two Coliseos de la Cruz and del Príncipe belonged to the City of Madrid and were administered by an *author*, at the time Eusebio Rivera (El Príncipe), and Manuel Martínez (La Cruz). The Madrid government named each year the authors that were to form part of each of the two companies.

²⁷ See also *El Correo de los Ciegos* no. 35, p. 137, against the criticism of *El Censor*.

France, Germany and Italy. The title page declares that Forner wrote his *Oración* to support Carlo Denina's discourse *Contestación a la pregunta "¿Qué se debe a España?"*.²⁸ Denina in turn responded to Nicolas Masson de Morvillier's (in)famous question "What do we owe to Spain?" in his article about Spain in the *Encyclopédie méthodique*. Forner and Denina refute Masson de Morvillier by recounting Spain's science (knowledge) contributions to Europe. Neither of them discusses music in their essays, yet Forner's *Oración apologética* advances the increasingly conservative position of writers, theater-makers, and politicians towards the turn of the nineteenth century. Forner continued to pique intellectuals over the following decades with his conservative views, and to spur debates in print while articulating pro-Spain attitudes that were quickly spreading among the Madrid population.

Changes in the publication of the main newspapers in Madrid also explain in part the boom in public opinion in the late eighteenth century. The *Diario de Madrid* was the only daily newspaper in Spain, and it suspended publication between 1781 and 1786; hence this particular medium was not available in the early 1780s.²⁹ Conversely, *El Censor* was only printed from 1781 to mid-1787, but it appeared only every other week and the "letters" that it published were not written by readers or collaborators, but by the anonymous authors. The *Correo de los Ciegos* only started in 1786. The *Memorial Literario* first came to light in 1784. By 1787, the year Los Caños del Peral reopened and an Italian opera company performed again in Madrid, there were four more periodicals in circulation than at the beginning of the decade, and this modified social communication.

The new Italian opera theater opened a utopian space for the men of letter that aspired to Spanish Europeanization in their own way, perhaps different from that of the Bourbon government. They hoped for a cosmopolitan public space where the audiences would not yell at

²⁸ Denina read this discourse at the Berlin Academy on February 26, 1786. Carlo Giovanni Maria Denina (1731-1813) was an Italian Jesuit historian residing at the court of Frederic II in the 1780s and 1790s.

²⁹ According to Yolanda F. Acker, the *Diario* was the first daily newspaper not only in Spain, but in all of Europe. The *Diario de Madrid* first appeared in 1758, under Ferdinand VI (r. 1746-1759) as *Diario noticioso, curioso-erudito y comercial, público y económico*. It suspended editions between 1776 and 1778, and then again between December 1781 and June 1786. Acker, 12.

the performers, a true theater with opera and ballet far from the seventeenth-century *corrales de comedias*. The author of the February 1787 letter to the *Correo* wishes that the barbarism of the corrupted Madrid coliseos (de la Cruz and del Príncipe) would submit to the *policía* of Los Caños del Peral, so meticulously codified. In fact, for this correspondent, theater was “an essential branch of *policía*.” Another letter, from April 1787, portrays the Italian opera performers at Los Caños as a model for the *cómicos* of the coliseos because they do not break out of character interacting with the audience.³⁰ This second letter observes that the architecture of the theater made possible the exemplary behavior of both performers and audiences. Yet one more letter advises that the posters announcing the theater programs should be printed like they are at Los Caños and in other European theaters, and not manuscript. The same correspondent suggests ways to expedite the access of the public inside the building.³¹ These three letters depict Los Caños del Peral as a utopian microcosmos (micro-state?) of *policía*, a haven of orderly and composed socialization very different from the coliseos of La Cruz and El Príncipe. Even though the utopian functioning of the new theater did not correspond to the facts, it speaks of the aspirations of a certain kind of upper-class Madrilenians to improve their city in order to match the European capitals.³²

Among the upper classes were those who adopted a *regalist* posture, the high nobility that could afford to challenge the royal court, and the literary neoclassicists. The pro-state authors that published newspaper articles in favor of opera in 1787 put the effort in similarities: to improve Spain to be on par with Europe, to clean it from corruption. They focused less on

³⁰“¿Por qué no se han de observar en estos teatros corrompidos, las sabias reglas ó precauciones que se han establecido para el de la Opera?” (*Correo* no.39, p. 156). “Todos guardan bien el carácter que representan, y se nota que se revisten de él. No hay cuchicheos entre ellos, señas ni besamanos á los expectadores, ni se observan entre bastidores mirones, pisan bien las tablas y se señorean del teatro: en fin, en muchos adminículos pueden tomar reglas de ellos nuestros mejores cómicos.” (*Correo* no. 51, p. 207)^o.

³¹ “Yo en ninguna Corte he visto que los carteles que sirven de anuncio á un tan respetable Publico (en el que entran la Grandeza, Ministros, Embajadores) sean manuscritos...” (*Correo* no. 52, 214).

³² Emilio Casares Rodicio has proposed that Italian opera failed in Madrid in the 1790s because the infrastructure of Los Caños del Peral was flawed from the start. In his view, the impresario system was incompatible with traditional royal patronage of Madrid theaters. Casares Rodicio rejects the traditional explanation that the enterprise of Italian opera at Los Caños did not succeed because Madrid audiences disliked the genre (Casares Rodicio, “La creación operística en España,” in *La Opera en España e Hispanoamérica*, 21-57.

defensive and more on restoration: “El perfecto modo de responder á las satiras de los Extrangeros es, enmendando nuestros defectos, vindicando asi la nación en esta parte...” (The perfect way to respond to foreigner is rectifying our shortcomings, thus vindicating this part of the nation...) ³³ The converse reaction retrenches into difference: to discredit Europe as corrupted and posit Spain as the true, the uncorrupted. They differed from the literary neoclassicists because they cared more about *policía* than about adherence to the classical rules of drama.

The upper classes of Madrid became friends or foes, and supported or attacked musical activities as circumstances changed. The opening of Los Caños del Peral in 1787 provoked suspicion in the neoclassicists because opera did not conform to the laws of verisimilitude, but found support in the regalists and the high nobility because it promised to make Madrid more cosmopolitan. In 1786 and following neoclassicist principles, “Discourse 97” of *El Censor* supported singing, albeit not of the operatic kind. One year later a letter was published in the *Correo de los Ciegos* that championed Italian opera and pronounced it an art form unrelated to the theater of ancient Greece. The correspondent rejected the neoclassicist rule that all drama should emulate reality, and argued that the beautiful fiction of opera substitutes for verisimilitude. Furthermore, he denied any connection between opera and classic Greek theatre and adjudicated the invention of the former to Italians. ³⁴ The author of the letter also admitted that, in opera, the lyrics are subject to the music. In his view, opera belonged in cosmopolitan Europe and not in the classical antiquity.

Italian opera at Los Caños had to withstand the attacks of the neoclassicists that dictated the rules of drama in Madrid since the mid-eighteenth century. Neoclassicist tendencies predominated in the literary circles of Spain during the second half of the century, at least in theory. The members of the *Academia del Buen Gusto* propelled the rules of Aristotelian poetics. Academy members included Blas Nasarre, Agustín Montiano, Diego de Torres

³³ *Correo* no. 52, p. 214.

³⁴ *Correo* no. 55, p. 234.

Villarroel, and Ignacio de Luzán.³⁵ The latter had published his *Poética* in 1737, a treatise that would become the backbone of Spanish literary neoclassicism.³⁶ These authors were centrally concerned with verisimilitude. They demanded that the classical unities of action, place, and time be observed; sometimes they demanded it more strictly than Aristotle originally did. From their perspective, Baroque Spanish theater from the Golden Age obliterated Aristotelian principles with its mix of tragedy and comedy and its exuberant stories. To restore the damage perpetrated by Lope de Vega and his contemporaries, dramatic literature should look back not only to the practices of the ancient Greek, but also to 16th-century Spanish playwrights. Because they prioritized normative above practice, neoclassicists were identified as part of a lineage of *preceptistas* who championed the doctrines of Aristotle and Horace.

For Luzán, neoclassicist drama would launch Spain forward into European progress. It is here that mid-century neoclassicism meets Enlightenment, in the belief that discourse needs to be cleaned of unrealistic components and subject to reason. Influential as Luzán's *Poetics* may have been, theater audiences did not like the stiffness of neoclassic drama. Audiences and critics did not reject neoclassicist rules only because the resulting stage pieces bored them, but also because these rules apparently subverted Spanish tradition. In the mid-eighteenth century, the intent to inject reason into theater reeked more of French than of Greek. While in the mid-century the polemics centered on the primacy of ingenuity vs. rules, the weight of the matter shifted towards Spanish vs. foreign as the second half of the century went by. In spite of the change of focus, many of the arguments of the late-18th century have their roots in early neoclassicism.

When Italian opera was offered to the general public of Madrid in 1787, they had a good variety of musical theater to choose from. Many of the genres available at the time have been

³⁵ The *Academia del Buen Gusto* started meeting in 1749, under the patronage of noblewoman Ana María Josefa de Zúñiga Sotomayor, XI Countess of Lemos and Marquise of Sarria. Among the membership are Blas Antonio Nasarre y Ferriz (1689-1751), royal librarian; Agustín de Montiano y Luyando (1697-1764), first director of the *Real Academia de la Historia*; Diego de Torres Villarroel (1694-1770), an eccentric profesor at the University of Salamanca; and Ignacio de Luzán Claramunt de Suelves y Gurrea (1702-1754), the main theorist in the group.

³⁶ Ignacio de Luzán Claramunt de Suelves y Gurrea, *La poética, o reglas de la poesía en general, y de sus principales especies* (Zaragoza: Francisco Revilla, 1737).

called short (*breve*) or minor theater.³⁷ Most current scholars reject the term “minor theater” because it implies that there is a major, better theater. I will use *teatro breve*. The genres encompassed under this umbrella term are manifold and change through time.³⁸ Along *teatro breve* we find *comedias* of a longer duration, also within the popular tradition. Neoclassicists preferred to title their plays *tragedias*, but in practice *comedia* meant any full-length theater piece, not necessarily comic, but often involving comic elements to varying degrees. *Comedias*, *sainetes*, and *tonadillas* all included music to a different extent. In the eighteenth century, a *comedia* regularly included two to three songs, in addition to instrumental music. A *sainete* is very brief, so it may only include one musical number (or several, there is no standard), and a *tonadilla* is mostly sung, similar to an *intermezzo*, but can also include spoken dialog in verse.³⁹ All three genres intend to portray everyday life, as opposed to the aristocratic characters and heroic plots of *tragedias* and *opera seria*. Neoclassicists disapproved of the stereotypical plots and characters of popular theater and of their dubious moral probity, not to mention the fact that most musical theater violated the norms of verisimilitude.

If partisans of the government endorsed Los Caños del Peral as space for the reform of Madrid mores, some members of the high nobility were personally invested in the patronage of opera. The Junta the Hospitales de Madrid, a governmental organ, could never have rehabilitated Los Caños without the support of the board formed by members of the nobility. The powerful María Josefa Pimentel y Téllez Girón (1750-1834), Countess of Benavente and Duchess of Osuna sponsored the arts indefatigably. In January 1787 she provided significant support for Los Caños de Peral when paid in advance for a box for 150 opera performances.⁴⁰

³⁷ Leandro’s father, Nicolás Fernández de Moratín, was also a writer, and a member of the *Academia del Buen Gusto*, hence a neoclassicist of the previous generation.

³⁸ Two of the most prominent ones during the second half of the eighteenth century are *sainetes* and *tonadillas*.

³⁹ This definition of *tonadilla* applies only to the second half of the second century. During the first half of the century, the term designed a collection of sung numbers at the end of a *sainete* or a *baile*. María Encina Cortizo, “Tonadilla escénica,” *Diccionario de la Música Española e Hispanoamericana*, dir. Emilio Casares Rodicio (Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 2002), 343.

⁴⁰ The box amounted to 7,500 reales de vellón. She delivered the amount to Juan Bautista Montaldi, the impresario for Los Caños del Peral that wrote the articles about opera in the *Diario de Madrid*. The receipt from Jan 24, 1787 is

She was the only woman in the board of Los Caños, formed by four members of the high, old nobility established in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, two politicians with newly acquired nobility titles, and a former Italian prince.⁴¹

Before the opening of Los Caños del Peral, The Countess of Benavente had supported a few productions of Italian opera in the Coliseo del Príncipe between 1783 and 1787.⁴² These were sung in Spanish by the house actor-singers, the same that performed all the Spanish repertory of comedias, sainetes, tonadillas, and other genres. Spoken Spanish dialog substituted for Italian recitatives. The Countess of Benavente paid for copies of the music, printed librettos also for extra orchestra musicians. Audience liked these adaptations. Even once Los Caños del Peral started functioning in 1787, audiences acclaimed the “zarzuela” (Spanish) version of Paisiello’s *Il Barbiere de Siviglia* in December of the same year, by the Rivera company at El Príncipe. The opera/zarzuela inspired an anonymous, printed poem that congratulated the production for its success. The author mentions in the poem the total earnings that *Il Barbiere* afforded the Coliseo del Príncipe, which surpassed those of all the comedias playing at the same time.

The Italian operas and company at Los Caños del Peral prompted comparisons with the local coliseos regarding not only the *policia* and decorum of the space, but also the type of spectacle, the singing and acting style. The *Correo de los Ciegos* published in June 1787 a letter that praised the cómica Catalina Tordesillas, yet assessed her unfit for the “gorgoritos” (ornamentations) required to sing Italian opera.⁴³ The letter resolved that what La Tordesillas lacked in operatic technique she possessed in expressivity, because when she sang she moved

in BNE Mss/14016/3-194. Montaldi did not measure up to the role of impresario and Melchor Ronzi, the director, assumed the administration of the theater.

⁴¹ The rest of the members were Vicente Joaquín Osorio de Moscoso y Guzmán (1756-1816), Marquis of Astorga/Count of Altamira; Pedro de Alcántara Fernández de Híjar y Abarca de Bolea, Duke of Aliaga; Vittorio Filippo, former Prince of Masserano in Piemonte; Gabriel Antonio Beltrán de Santa Cruz y Aranda, former Count of San Juan de Jaruco; Jerónimo de Mendinueta y Muzquiz (1757-1817), Secretary of the Council of the Inquisition and later Count of La Cimera; Pedro de Alcántara Álvarez de Toledo y Salm-Salm (1729-1790), Duke of the Infantado (BNE Mss/14052/3, 1793).

⁴² According to Carmena y Millán in *Crónica de la ópera italiana en Madrid*, the operas at El Príncipe were: 1783, *I visionari* (Pasquale Anfossi); 1785, *L'italiana in Londra* (Domenico Cimarosa); 1786, *L'italiana in Londra* and *La serva padrona* (Giovanni Paisiello); 1787, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Giovanni Paisiello).

⁴³ Catalina Tordesillas was Italian at birth, but moved to Spain in her youth and performed in Spanish theaters for many years.

the hearts of her audiences.⁴⁴ In *The Tonadilla in Performance*, Elisabeth Le Guin concludes that the singing style required by Spanish stage music differed considerably from that of opera. The choice between Italian and Spanish singers spurred aesthetic debates throughout the late 1780s and the 1790s. The dichotomy between technique/artifice and expressivity formed part of many critiques and apologies, the former associated with Italian opera, the latter with Spanish music and language.

In the midst of the stir caused by the new Italian opera theater in 1787, a very young actress-singer made her debut on the Madrid stages. She captured the attention of audiences and composers from the beginning. At the age of 12, Lorenza Correa commenced a successful career in Spanish theater that ultimately opened for her the doors to the opera theaters in Italy. The talent of Correa as a singer inspired some of the most virtuosic efforts of Spanish theater composers in the late-eighteenth century. She started out in the tradition of Spanish theater *cómicas*, but adapted to changes in Spanish theater into the nineteenth century to perform also more sentimental roles.

The Madrid coliseos featured many famous female singers that inspired poems and eulogies, yet Correa seems to have developed enough vocal abilities to compete with Italian singers. The *Correo de los Ciegos* published a letter in June of 1787 reviewing her performance of a tonadilla in the Coliseo del Príncipe. In it, the author describes Correa's qualities: dexterity, clear, sweet, malleable voice, wide range, expressivity, and modesty. The best singers from the Madrid coliseos were sometimes called to perform concerts together with the Italian singers at Los Caños del Peral, including Catalina Tordesillas and Lorenza Correa and her sisters.⁴⁵

The impact of Los Caños affected Spanish imagination beyond its walls because Madrid already had a rich musico-theatrical activity that appealed to middle- and working-class spectators as well. The opera patrons at Los Caños del Peral constituted a small part of the

⁴⁴ Lorenzo Chamorro signed this letter to the *Correo de Madrid*, no. 71, June 23, 1787.

⁴⁵ Lorenza Correa came from a family of actor-singers. Both her parents were *cómicos*, and so were her sisters Laureana and Petronila, yet she achieved the highest fame.

Madrid population; Madrid in turn, only a small part of Spain⁴⁶. But many Madrilenians had strong feelings about musical theater, and some took sides to defend either the Coliseo de la Cruz or its rival El Príncipe. Theater formed part of city life and conversations, possibly even for those who did not attend regularly.⁴⁷ Theatergoers developed personal and group preferences towards certain performers and styles, and they voiced their opinions aloud, yelling at the people on stage, whistling, and clapping in patterns. A third theater altered the Cruz-Príncipe dynamic, all the more when it entailed the import of foreign singers in a time when Spain continued to lose prestige in Western Europe. As Francisco Sánchez Blanco observes, Enlightenment in late-eighteenth century Spain moved from politics to arts and culture. Art institutions became sites of contention to form opinions regarding the fate of the nation and the role of the different social strata in it.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ According to the Census of Floridablanca in 1787, the first reliable census in Spain, the province of Madrid accounted for 2.7% of the Spanish population; the City of Madrid for 1.4%.

⁴⁷ A letter in the *Correo de los Ciegos* suggests that theater was part of everyday conversation in Madrid. (*Correo* April 21, 1787).

⁴⁸ The census of 1787 registered and classified Spanish men by occupation. Fausto Dopico and Robert Rowland believe that an estimation of the census' shortcomings "seems necessary to place Spanish society in the European context and to better understand the avatars of the modernization process that came later." ("Demografía del censo de Floridablanca, 591).