
This is the **author's version** of the book part:

Martínez i García, Sílvia. «Judges, guitars, freedom and the mainstream : problematizing the early cantautor in Spain». A: The Singer-Songwriter in Europe: Paradigms, Politics and Place. 2016, p. 123-135. 13 pàg. Surrey: Ashgate. DOI 10.4324/9781315552910

This version is available at <https://ddd.uab.cat/record/288689>

under the terms of the  IN COPYRIGHT license

To cite this chapter: Martínez, Sílvia. 2016. "Judges, Guitars, Freedom & the Mainstream: Problematizing the Early *Cantautor* in Spain". In: Green, Stuart and Marc, Isabelle. 2016. *The Singer-Songwriter in Europe: Paradigms, Politics and Place*. Routledge/Ashgate, 123-135

**Disponemos de la traducción de este artículo al castellano. Si desea una copia, escribanos a la siguiente dirección y se la compartiremos: silvia.martinez.garcia@uab.cat*

Judges, Guitars, Freedom & the Mainstream: Problematizing the Early *Cantautor* in Spain

Sílvia Martínez

Cantautor is the word in the Spanish, Catalan and Galician languages coined in the 1960s to refer to a politically engaged singer who performed his/her own songs. In Basque, the term is *kantari*.¹ The output of these musicians was labelled *canCIÓN de autor* (literally author's song), or sometimes *canCIÓN protesta* (protest song).² This chapter deals with these early musicians and songs, from their emergence until the death of General Francisco Franco, that is, the second half of the Franco dictatorship (1959-1975). The context of late-Francoism is crucial in the birth and rise of the *canCIÓN de autor*. This emerged as a political action and flourished throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s. It was mainly a form of protest against the Franco regime and eventually declined in the 1980s with the consolidation of the democratic process.³

This chapter is divided into two halves. The first describes the birth of the *cantautor*, originating in Catalonia in 1959 with the Nova Cançó (New Song) movement, and subsequently spreading to the rest of the country.⁴ Two particular idiosyncratic aspects of the *canCIÓN de autor* are emphasized here: 1) its close link to regional languages (in particular Catalan, Basque and Galician), and the decisive role that *cantautores* played in the recovery of these languages – heavily censored during the dictatorship – for public use; and 2)

¹ Although the Basque term '*kantautore*' is sometimes used, this is a neologism derived from Spanish that was not in use in the 1960s. Moreover, it has been openly rejected by Basque singer-songwriters, who prefer to use the term '*kantari*' or '*abeslari*', synonyms of 'singer' (personal communication of Karlos Sánchez Ekiza).

² Other terms *nueva canCIÓN* (new song) or *canCIÓN política* (political song) were used less frequently. Likewise, *cantante-autor* (singer-author) was used occasionally.

³ A new generation of *cantautores* would appear from 1995 onwards (Pedro Guerra, Rosana, Ismael Serrano, etc.), claiming direct lineage from the pioneers of the 1960s and 1970s. Yet they would compose and sing in hugely contrasting historical and musical contexts. See del Val and Green's chapter in this volume.

⁴ The term *cantautor* is used throughout this chapter to refer to those practitioners of *canCIÓN de autor* across Spain. Geographical distinctions between its variants across the various linguistic cultures of Spain will become clear over the course of this study.

the complicated relationship of *cantautores* with traditional folk music, whose close links to the *canción protesta* in other Spanish-speaking countries were hindered in Spain by Franco's nationalist cultural policies.

In the second half of the chapter, I explore a number of contradictions left unaddressed by scholars,⁵ whose analysis of the *canción de autor* has tended to describe it as a self-sufficient and self-managed scene, imbued with some sort of moral supremacy that distanced it from 'mere' commercial objectives. I contend that this vision – widely held at the time by audiences and musicians alike – is key to understanding the boundaries of the Spanish *canción de autor*. I compare and contrast the scene with other popular music practices and contemporary solo singers in order to challenge the dualistic interpretations that underlie such critical discourse: mainstream vs. underground, pro-Franco vs. anti-Franco, politicized vs. hedonistic, committed vs. commercial, singers vs. *cantautores*. By comparing specific aspects of the careers of renowned *cantautores* (such as Raimon, Mari Trini, Paco Ibáñez, Maria del Mar Bonet, Lluís Llach, Mikel Laboa, Carlos Cano and Joan Manuel Serrat) with other singers addressing very different audiences (Conchita Bautista, Raphael, José Guardiola and Julio Iglesias), I construct a less monolithic, more nuanced, picture than the conventional view of the *cantautor*, one which is probably more faithful to the actual complexity of this musical movement that would leave a long-lasting mark on the relationships between music and politics in Spain.

The Initial Catalan Model under the Dictatorship

The establishment of Franco's dictatorial regime from 1939 brought about terrible social and political repression. Particularly brutal in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, the degree of that repression then varied with successive governments over the course of a thirty-six-year period. The social and linguistic uniformity of the state was truly the obsession that haunted the dictator throughout his life. Depending on one's ideological viewpoint, Spain could be considered either a multinational state or a single nation with strong historical and cultural 'regional' identities. Despite the fact that languages other than Castilian have historically co-existed within the administrative territory of the Spanish state, throughout the dictatorship Catalan, Basque, Galician and other 'minority' languages were banished from the administrative system, education and many other forms of public communication, and severely restricted in cultural production. In his study of the Catalan language and its repression during this period, Josep Benet mentions a pronouncement by the dictator before the end of the war, in which he unequivocally claimed his vision of the linguistic and cultural uniformity of Spain:

Spain is organized along broad totalitarian lines by means of national institutions that ensure its integrity, unity and continuity. The character of each region will be respected,

⁵ The main references in this field are Fernando G. Lucini (1989, 1998), Víctor Claudín (1981) and García-Soler (1976). In English, see Boyle (1995) and Ayats and Salicrú-Maltas (2013).

but without compromising national unity, which is to be absolute, with one common language – Castilian – and one sole identity – the Spanish one (Franco, quoted in Benet 1979, p.97).⁶

The subsequent state policies promoting linguistic and cultural uniformity – strongly backed by official censorship mechanisms and police repression – sidelined these (what were now referred to as) ‘dialects’ from cultural life and brought them to the brink of extinction.

These policies were developed for nearly two decades in a rapidly changing economic context. After the Civil War (1936-1939), ten years of autarky and isolation from the international community had led the country to the edge of collapse by the end of the 1940s. Simultaneously, the Cold War powers were laying down new geostrategic rules in which Spain gained a certain relevance on account of its geographical position and fiercely anti-communist views. As a result, the country was progressively reinstated on the international stage from 1950 onwards,⁷ without any significant change in its internal political system. Yet this triggered a gradual evolution in Franco’s government (Townson, 2007, pp.11-12). The presence from 1957 of Opus Dei ‘technocrats’ in government was part of an economic reform plan that would set the foundations for a free market economy. The economic prosperity of the 1960s quickly brought about dramatic developments across society and culture in Spain, particularly in the areas of tourism and the media, and in the aspirations of a new generation of students and intellectuals (Iglesias, 2010, p.228). This political context is crucial to understanding the moment in which *cantautores* appeared, accompanying and occasionally leading the budding democratic forces during the 1960s.

At the beginning of this period, a small segment of the Barcelona bourgeoisie promoted an incipient artistic and political movement aimed at stimulating the creation of original songs in Catalan: the Nova Cançó. The Nova Cançó, as Garcia-Soler notes, ‘was promoted from its birth as a movement of national resistance: it started as a cultural and linguistic claim’ (1976, p.31).⁸ This initiative was made public in a manifesto entitled ‘Ens calen cançons d’ara’ (We Need Songs for Today), written by Lluís Serrahima and published in January 1959:

⁶ ‘España se organiza en un amplio concepto totalitario, por medio de instituciones nacionales que aseguren su totalidad, su unidad y continuidad. El carácter de cada región será respetado, pero sin perjuicio para la unidad nacional, que la queremos absoluta, con una sola lengua, el castellano, y una sola personalidad, la española.’ This and other translations from Spanish and Catalan in this chapter, unless otherwise noted, are my own.

⁷ For example, the regime signed in those years agreements with the USA for the installation of military bases on Spanish soil (1953), with the Vatican state (1953), and Spain finally joined the FAO (1950), the UNESCO (1952) and the UN (1955) while the country was still subjected to a dictatorship rule.

⁸ ‘La Nova Cançó va ser promoguda des del començament com un moviment de resistència nacional, car ja de naixement partia d’una reivindicació lingüística i cultural’.

We have to sing songs but our songs, songs created today, relevant to us... Could you imagine a situation in which we have bards such as the “chansonniers” in France and they would go to every town all over the country singing our songs? (quoted in Ayats and Salicrú-Maltas, 2013, p.31)⁹

Serrahima’s publication was an open call for modern songwriters willing and able to render the social and political concerns of the Catalan people in song form. At the centre of the Nova Cançó movement was the collective Els Setze Jutges (The Sixteen Judges, named after a popular Catalan tongue-twister), initially a small group of amateur singers who presented their new songs in public. Its founder members Miquel Porter i Moix, Remei Margarit, Josep Maria Espinàs and Delfí Abella were gradually joined by others, such as Francesc Pi de la Serra, Guillermina Motta, Joan Manuel Serrat, Maria del Mar Bonet and Lluís Llach, until they reached the self-imposed target of sixteen politically committed artists.¹⁰

Following initial performances in Barcelona in 1961, Els Setze Jutges presented their work all over Catalonia and were immediately accepted by the public. The songs of this collective were straightforward compositions with lyrics inspired by everyday life, sometimes calling for togetherness and social solidarity, or containing veiled allusions to the lack of freedom. No matter how innocuous their lyrics were, however, these songs were important for their use of Catalan, a rebellious act and a political statement in itself.

These singers found their musical inspiration in the French model of the *auteur-compositeur-interprète* from the 1950s, embodied by Jacques Brel, Georges Brassens, Leo Ferré and Charles Aznavour. In a recent interview, Joan Manuel Serrat mentions these figures when remembering his first steps as a singer-songwriter:

When I started to write songs, my musical world passed through French song, which at the time was going through a brilliant era. There were great masters, Brassens, Brel, Léo Ferré and so many others. The French music movement after the war was very influential. I embodied all that in my work. (Martínez and Sales, 2013, p.198)

Indeed, the first published record of the Nova Cançó consisted of covers in Catalan of five Brassens songs by Josep Maria Espinàs (*Espinàs canta Brassens*, 1962). Despite the openly acknowledged influence of French song on the whole, however, Catalan *cantautores* employed a greatly simplified compositional framework (Espinàs, 1974, p.18). Music was deliberately relegated to a secondary role by early singers, who often played no more than a few chords on a guitar, the most affordable and popular instrument among

9 ‘Hem de cantar cançons, però nostres i fetes ara. Ens calen cançons que tinguin una actualitat per a nosaltres... us imagineu si, com a França, tinguéssim aquesta mena de trobadors com són els *chansonniers*, que anessin pels pobles i per tot el país cantant cançons nostres?’

10 *Els Setze Jutges* also include Enric Barbat, Xavier Elies, Maria del Carme Girau, Martí Llauredó, Joan Ramon Bonet, Maria Amèlia Pedrerol and Rafael Subirachs.

Spanish youth (and thus emblematic of these early performers).

The performances of Els Setze Jutges and Raimon (a *cantautor* from Valencia close to Els Setze Jutges and crucial in the diffusion of the Nova Cançó movement outside Catalonia) were the most acclaimed embodiments of this musical model. All these *cantautores* staged their songs simply, avoiding artificiality in their performances (a bare stage, basic stage lighting, no orchestral backing or rhythm section, amplification kept to a minimum), and employing static body language in order better to deliver what they saw as their unequivocal message to the public. Thus these musicians tried to be ‘the voice of the people’, to mediate between music and audience, to enable the public to make their songs its own and use them as a liberating weapon (Lucini, 1998, p.73). This orthodoxy was maintained by means of auditions organized by the senior members of Els Setze Jutges, in which many candidates were ruled out because their songs or performances did not match the aesthetics and attitudes of the collective (Claudín, 1981, p.67). While the Nova Cançó also included aesthetic currents less influenced by French song, such as Grup de Folk (a collective adapting North American folk songs and whose wild irreverence sat uncomfortably beside Els Setze Jutges), it was these sixteen ‘judges’ and their affiliates who would blaze a trail for those musicians who would soon emerge across the country.

Following the Nova Cançó Model: Political and Linguistic Claims

In the early 1960s, a few isolated *kantari* emerged who sang in the Basque language, Euskara, such as the Basque-French singer Michel Labéguerie.¹¹ But the first concerted attempt to pick up Els Setze Jutges’ baton outside Catalonia was the group Ez Dok Amairu (There Is No Thirteen, a reference to the bad luck associated with that number). In 1966 this group evolved into a multidisciplinary artistic collective led by Mikel Laboa and Benito Lertxundi. The musicians gathered under this label promoted the creation of songs in Euskara. While they displayed similarities with the Catalanian movement, they imprinted their own seal on their work, producing elaborate staging that moved beyond a straightforward performance. As they summarised later in interview: ‘The essence of our group resides in popular songs, music and musical instruments. To develop this form of expression we consider necessary the collaboration and understanding of other related artistic forms such as dance, poetry and theatre’ (Ez Dok Amairu, 1970, quoted in Lucini, 1998, p.96).¹²

¹¹ Labéguerie’s first recordings were two singles, both entitled *Labeguerie’reu Lau Kanta*, recorded in Bayonne and edited by Goiztiri in 1961 (Estornés Zubizarreta, s/d).

¹² “La base de nuestro grupo es la canción-música-instrumentos populares, y al profundizar en esta forma de expresión pensamos que surge la necesidad de una colaboración y aprehensión de otras formas artísticas afines como la danza, la poesía, el teatro, etc.” (Author’s translation).

Also in the mid-1960s, the group Voces Ceibes (Free Voices) emerged in Galicia from within a university environment.¹³ In 1968, a number of concerts were organized on campuses despite government attempts to ban them. Audiences at these concerts heard for the first time new songs in Galician by Benedicto García, Xavier González del Valle and other founders of this movement, which came to be known as the Nova Canción Galega (New Galician Song).

In both the Basque country and Galicia, the association between language and political stance paralleled that found in Catalonia. Poetic lyrics or explicit denunciations of the regime were not necessary because the context of their performances, and the mere use of a language other than the official one of the time, lent them a subversive power. Nevertheless, in other regions with a language overshadowed by Spanish, protest songs were not initially associated with the recovery and vindication of those languages. In Asturias, for example, this association was only to develop in 1975 under the heading of Nueu Canciu Astur (New Asturian Song), even if it is not still clear whether more Asturian singer-songwriters expressed themselves in their local language than in Spanish.¹⁴

Even in distant parts of Spain where these regional languages were not spoken, most opponents of the regime during the 1960s regarded this commitment to singing in 'minority' languages as a protest against the Franco dictatorship. As noted by Manuel Vázquez Montalbán (1989, p.8), in spite of linguistic differences, the supportive efforts and mobilizing potential of those singers were greatly appreciated in other regions. This is the most convincing explanation of how Lluís Llach and other singers managed to organize concerts in Catalan in Madrid during the mid-1960s, or of how Andalusian youth eagerly listened to Raimon in a language they could hardly understand. The strong collective memory of that period thus forged accounts for the fact that today, forty years after the end of the dictatorship, some of these songs in Basque and Catalan are still remembered throughout Spain as hymns of the demand for the restoration of civil liberties and democratic equality.¹⁵

¹³In Galicia, as well as in other parts of the country, left-wing students of many colleges and universities were at the centre of opposition to the regime from the 1950s onwards.

¹⁴ On Asturian *cantautores*, one can profitably consult a recent text written under a pseudonym by one of its main figures, Manolín Fernández. In this text, the author explains how he and his colleagues considered writing and singing in the local language about political themes of local interest, but it was not widespread at that time – hence their choice to sing in Spanish instead (Cimadevilla, 2010). Another approach to this phenomenon is provided by Marcela Romano in her wide-ranging presentation of Asturian song, from its origins to its present-day form (2009). I would like to thank Llorián García Florez for his guidance on this subject.

¹⁵ See, for example, the use of Llach's 'L'estaca' (The Stake), a hymn from 1968, as the closing song at the 2014 national assembly of Podemos, the new political party born in the aftermath of a wave of popular anti-austerity protests throughout Spain known as 15M in reference to 15 May 2011 and the Indignados (Outraged) movement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v8NcgLSxSEY> (Accessed on 7 May 2015).

Of course, this does not mean that *cantautores* only flourished as a musical and political phenomenon in regions with a minority language to defend. For example, Canción del Pueblo was a Madrid-based collective founded in 1967 that brought together Hilario Camacho, Elisa Serna and Adolfo Celdrán among others, and which set classical Spanish poets to music in imitation of Paco Ibáñez. Still one of the most influential Spanish *cantautores*, from exile in Paris during the early 1960s, Ibáñez set to music poems by Federico García Lorca, Gabriel Celaya and Rafael Alberti (among others) which resonated strongly in the context in which performed.¹⁶ Later in the 1960s and 1970s, a number of individuals and artistic collectives appeared across the country who drew on the same aesthetics and to the same end: to create new, politically and socially engaged songs, performed on stage by the songwriter him/herself. This would lead to the formation of a large repertoire of protest song in Spanish.¹⁷

To sum up, it can be said that the vindication of minority languages is key to understanding the rise of politically engaged *cantautores* in Spain. Yet this linguistic commitment cannot be taken as self-sufficient, nor these singer-songwriters as imbued with some sort of moral supremacy. On the one hand, this was because there was a *canCIÓN de autor* in the Spanish language. On the other, as I show below, this was because Catalan, Galician and Basque could also be found in songs that lacked the political function of the *canCIÓN de autor*. This was the case in traditional folk music, as well as in some modern popular music.

The Difficult Relationship Between the Cantautor and Traditional Folk Song

Besides their political protest and commitment to regional languages, *cantautores* of the 1960s in Spain maintained a close relationship with traditional music from different parts of the country. In addition to their original compositions, these artists often performed cover versions of folk songs from their region. While the link between both repertoires was often language, the *cantautores*' cultivation of folklore and traditional song was also part of a drive to get closer to popular culture, as a number of French *auteurs-compositeurs-interprètes* had done (Vázquez Montalbán, [1973] 2010, p.62).

While the mining of popular musical roots as a source of inspiration was epitomised by American artists – North Americans Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Pete Seeger, as well as Chilean Violeta Parra and Argentinian Atahualpa Yupanqui were highly influential in 1960s' Spain in this respect (Lucini, 1998,

¹⁶ Paco Ibáñez, born in Valencia to a Basque mother, would record songs in Basque many years after the *kantari* Imanol (CD *Oroitzen*, 1998).

¹⁷ A thorough account of the early *canCIÓN de autor* initiatives in Spain can be found in Claudín (1981).

p.57) – this practice was much more problematic on the Spanish scene, essentially because of the connotations acquired by traditional music as the result of Franco’s cultural policies.

From the end of the Spanish Civil War, the Franco regime endeavoured to assimilate regional differences by depicting them as mere folkloric stereotypes. Through ‘Coros y Danzas’ (Choirs and Dances from Spain), an institution dedicated to the compilation and exhibition of regional music and dances, official culture consisted of carefully staged folkloric artistic manifestations which represented no threat to Spanish unity. Regional traditional music was thus included from the early 1940s in the regime’s symbolic system, and consequently marked with a strong ideological, catholic and traditional stamp (Pérez Zaldondo, 2006, p.150).¹⁸ This accounts for the difficulties of Franco’s opponents when incorporating folklore into their music. As Claudín has remarked as regards the Galician Voces Ceibes:

They reject folklore as a mean of expression, a folklore manipulated at that time by fascist ideology. They favoured other forms influenced by Raimon and other Catalan singers... They set to music poems by well-known authors or by new writers, disseminating the Galician literature of the time. And their intention is to represent the social realities of their people. (Claudín, 1981, p.117)¹⁹

However, other *cantautores* openly resisted this misappropriation, and reclaiming folklore became a distinctive mark of their output. This was the case of José Antonio Labordeta, an emblematic Aragonese singer strongly committed to the defence of folklore and individual liberties as inseparable acts; or the movement called Nueva Canción Canaria (New Canarian Song), born in 1966 in the Canary Islands, that focused on the recovery of local folklore with groups such as Los Sabandeños and Taburiente. On some occasions, the work of these *cantautores* turned out to be crucial for the preservation of a traditional repertoire. Such is the case of Joaquín Díaz, a Castilian *cantautor* considered the Spanish Pete Seeger and an unavoidable reference for present-day Spanish folklore studies.²⁰

The relationship between *canción de autor* and folklore was particularly problematic in Andalusia given that the Franco regime had been using flamenco and other Andalusian genres in order to promote the country as a tourist destination since the turn of the 1960s. This trend was not new and followed a nineteenth-century discourse that had presented Andalusian pseudo-flamenco – just as the *habanera* and the *jota* had been before – as the embodiment of Spanishness in musical form. Nevertheless, Franco’s cultural

¹⁸ For a study of the manipulation of folklore during Francoism, see Ortiz (1999).

¹⁹ “[Voces Ceibes] Rechazan el folklore como vehículo de expresión, manipulado hasta ese momento por la ideología fascista, asumiendo nuevas formas influenciadas por Raimon y otros cantantes catalanes... Musican poemas de autores conocidos o nuevos, difundiendo la poesía gallega del momento. Y su pretensión es la del acercamiento a la realidad social de su pueblo” (Author’s translation).

²⁰ The work of Joaquín Díaz as a researcher on folklore, including his first steps as a folk singer, can be seen in the documentary *El río que suena, reflejo del tiempo: Joaquín Díaz*, 2014 (dir. by Inés Toharia Terán)

policies fostered and reinforced this view, in particular through Spain's prolific post-war musical film production.²¹ When the musical collective of *cantautores* called Manifesto Canción del Sur (Manifesto Song of the South) appeared in Granada in 1969, its members stressed the fact that the popular roots of their new songs were incompatible with the established moral values and oppression of the dictatorship (Lucini, 1989, pp.155-6). Led by Juan de Loxa, these musicians took part in performances all over Andalusia, emphasizing their political dissent and their intention to reconnect with the cultural roots of the region. The group's most prominent member was Carlos Cano, who, a few years later, became the first singer to overcome the historical prejudice surrounding the *copla* – one of the most popular musical genres of the first half of the twentieth century in Spain, but tainted on account of its association with the official culture of the Franco regime.²² In this case, it was possible for a *cantautor* to rescue the influence of a historical musical practice, restoring the critical and subversive capacity of which it had been deprived (Colmeiro, 2003).

Problematizing the Canción de Autor and Mainstream Music

In the previous section I summarized the main characteristics of the Spanish *canción de autor*: its principal musical influence (the model of the French *chanson* of the 1950s), the *cantautores*' anti-Francoist stance, their commitment to recovering the country's minority languages, and the controversial use of traditional music as a base for the creation of new songs or as a complement to the *canciones de autor*. There is scholarly agreement on all these points. Indeed, the difficulties in the use of the term *cantautor* today in Spain are precisely related to these definitive characteristics of the *canción de autor* of the 1960s and 1970s. As Diego Manrique rightly points out, in contemporary Spain some *cantautores* have tried to cast aside that initial politicization by promoting the idea of the *cantautor* as 'anyone who sings his or her own songs' (2002, p.3).²³ The *canción de autor* of the 1960s does not fit this definition, since no one back then found it problematic that one of the pioneering and most respected *cantautores*, Paco Ibáñez, did not write the lyrics of his own songs.

In contrast, Julio Iglesias, another singer who reached the top of the charts at the end of the decade, is the author of the text and the music of his first LP;

²¹ Studies about the construction and manipulation of a stereotypical all-Spanish musical style associated with flamenco can be read in Steingress (2006), Alonso (1998, 2010) and Washabaugh (2012) among others.

²² *Copla*, also called *canción española* (Spanish song), was deeply rooted in Spain from the 1930s and remained very popular for decades. It always had a close connection with flamenco because *copla* songs often utilized flamenco-inspired patterns. showed from the very beginning of his career a true commitment towards this genre, which inspired many of their own songs, although those of his albums fully dedicated to *copla* were not to appear until a decade after the death of Franco (*Cuaderno de coplas*, 1985). For more details about these relationships and the recovery of *copla* by Carlos Cano see Martínez (2013).

²³ 'cantautor es todo el que canta sus propias canciones'.

on *Yo canto* (1969) all the songs bar one are penned by Iglesias (Juan Pardo's 'Alguien que pasó'). In spite of this, Julio Iglesias was never labelled a *cantautor*. This is due to the fact that, in addition to its strong political stance, the *canción de autor* of that period was defined in opposition to the 'other kind of song', said to be 'a consumer product offering a form of superficial, unrealistic and vulgar escapism' (Lucini, 1989, p.28),²⁴ a category in which many defenders of the *canción de autor* would certainly place Julio Iglesias. According to this dichotomy, a singer was able to offer either 'beautiful consumer products' or 'sincere songs'; to be either a committed, struggling, anti-Francoist musician or a hedonistic entertainer; either a singer for the unworried masses or a singer for socially aware workers and bright students. However, as evidenced by the Gramscian reading of Labanyi, such dualistic oppositions fail to explain the complexity of appropriation and assimilation in the circulation of culture (2002, p.212). This dichotomous reading does not mirror a real division between mainstream and underground or alternative music. *Cantautores* enjoyed a growing share of the market from the end of the 1960s, establishing their own record labels (Edigsa, Herri-Gogoa, Artezi, etc.) and distribution networks to this end. Indeed, as sales figures of the time show, Raimon, Mari Trini, Victor Manuel, Benito Lertxundi, Cecilia and Joan Manuel Serrat, among other *cantautores*, were often the best-selling artists from 1968 onwards (Salaverri, 2005).

Nevertheless, *cantautores* – even if they reached the masses – were usually presented and seen by their public as honest authors of their own songs, without commercial designs, and who delivered a direct and politically-engaged message. It was not so important to be completely responsible for the totality of the product because one could set to music somebody else's texts on the condition that the poetic universe offered to the public was coherent, engaged and sincere. To be considered a *cantautor*, it was more important to be a particular kind of creative artist than the actual author of all the lyrics and music:

Against established song, imposed on and hammered into us through extensive radio airing; against that giant (...) fabricated with money, began to emerge from the weakest corners the *canción de autor*; this new *canción de autor* was committed to social protest and serious, responsible cultural action, possessed undeniable aesthetic qualities and reflected deeply human issues (Claudín, 1981, p.28).²⁵

According to such a dualistic view, there is no doubt about which categories singers like Paco Ibáñez (or Raimon, Laboa and Labordeta, to name just a few pioneers), and singers such as Julio Iglesias belonged to. The flaw is that these radical divisions between 'commercial' and 'committed', 'hedonistic' and

²⁴ "La canción como simple producto para la evasión y para el consumo –con frecuencia superficial, irreal y ramplona" (Author's translation)

²⁵ 'Contra la canción establecida, impuesta, emanada a golpe de ondas radiofónicas, frente a ese gigante (...) fabricado con dinero empieza a surgir, desde lo más débil y apartado, la canción de autor, comprometida, de protesta, de acción cultural, seria, responsable, de calidad estética cierta y de problemática hondamente humana'.

'responsible' or 'anti-Franco' and 'pro-Franco' vanish as soon as these *cantautores* start forming part of the music industry as professional artists.

As stated above, the dominant view of the early *canCIÓN de autor* tends to present it as a self-managed scene, free from mainstream commercial considerations or intentions. But we should not forget that, at the same time as their careers began, important economic reforms were being implemented in Spain that would allow the emergence of a free market economy. The resulting incipient economic prosperity would lead in these years, among other developments, to massive imports of cultural products and a totally reinvigorated record industry (Townson, 2007). Despite freeing the economy, however, the regime was still a fierce dictatorship keeping political life under strict control and determining media content by means of 'preliminary censorship'.²⁶ Radio, television and song festivals were the only platforms that *cantautores* could look to if they wanted to become known to the general public. For example, the Nova Cançó would never have gained popular attention without the famous program Radioscope; it was only with this programme, created in 1964 and hosted by Salvador Escamilla on Radio Barcelona, that these singers were truly catapulted to fame.²⁷

Moreover music festivals thrived all over Spain throughout the 1960s in the wake of the Sanremo Music Festival in Italy. More than radio, these were the main promotional showcases for *cantautores*, essentially because they were broadcast live and because the winning songs were guaranteed promotion and commercial success. The most important festivals in Spain were the 'Festival Español de la Canción de Benidorm', which first ran in 1959, and the Eurovision Song Contest, the major European musical showcase. Although *cantautores* claimed their creative freedom and independence from the music industry structure and promotional machinery, in reality the only way to ensure a professional career was to sing at such music festivals. Raimon, for instance, won the 1963 Festival de la Canción Mediterránea in Barcelona with a romantic song in Catalan, 'Se'n va anar' (She's gone away). Lluís Llach, on the other hand, was awarded second prize in the Festival de la Canción de Barcelona (1968) with the song 'A cara o creu' (Heads or Tails). Curiously, neither of these songs were original compositions, but written by Josep María Andreu and Lleó Borrell.

As happened to other singers who were given a springboard by some of these festivals, Llach's success in 1968 led CBS records to offer him an enticing contract. Llach's decision to turn it down and keep working with a small local company, Concentric, is still recalled as a legendary response to the pressure endured by *cantautores* to build on their market share (most often by abandoning their mother tongue). According to the internal logic of the *canCIÓN*

²⁶ Within this censorship program, producers of cultural products had to obtain the approval of the authorities before releasing their work.

²⁷ Radio Barcelona was part of Cadena Ser, one of the few private media groups authorized in the country.

de autor of that time, resisting major record labels was one of the main signs of moral integrity. 'Established' singers, promoted by these major labels never received recognition from *cantautores*, not even Josep Guardiola – a famous crooner who recorded songs in Catalan before any member of Els Setze Jutges²⁸ – or singers such as Andrés do Barro and Juan Pardo, two composer-performers who occasionally recorded songs in Galician around this time (Lucini, 1998, p.104).

The case of Joan Manuel Serrat, probably the most controversial *cantautor* in Spain, shows better than any other the tensions between *canción de autor* and mainstream music, between minority languages and official Spanish, the resistance to and pressure from majors, the opposition to Franco's policies, and so forth. Serrat caused a tremendous uproar when he was chosen in 1968 to represent Spain at the Eurovision Festival. He was a young and successful member of Els Setze Jutges, appreciated throughout the country: his songs – romantic, intimate, and sung in Catalan – became popular in record time, breaking into the national charts in 1967. In this period, singers could only perform at the Eurovision Song Contest by direct invitation of Spanish Television, the festival being another cog in the machinery of the government's cultural policy. In an attempt to show a more modern and friendly face in accordance with its supposedly more open economic and cultural policies, Franco's government believed that this young and cheerful singer, appreciated by the public, would be a good choice in the campaign to improve the country's image. Serrat did not possess by then the expressive force or the political clout of Raimon or Ibáñez, yet he was a successful singer and offered a clear alternative to performers such as Conchita Bautista or Raphael, his predecessors in the festival. However, a problem arose when Serrat refused to participate in the song contest at the very last moment, arguing that he was not allowed to sing the chosen song in Catalan. Yet at the end of that same year, Serrat signed a contract with Zafiro-Novola, a mainstream pop record company, to edit his own compositions in Spanish. His colleagues of the Nova Cançó severely criticized him for that decision, while the official Spanish media banned him for several years after what came to be known as the 'Eurovision affair'.²⁹

Beyond his polemical bilingualism, Serrat's success was due to the new trend of his lyrics with poetic and modern stories about everyday life (Vázquez Montalbán, 1973, pp.100-107), and to his musical flexibility, which made him quickly stray from the stylistic models of Els Setze Jutges. Serrat introduced in his songs elements of the modern Spanish melodic song (his arrangements were similar to those of Julio Iglesias, Raphael and Nino Bravo), as well as borrowings from Latin American pop ballads and African-American pop music. Even though Serrat's songs followed the French model in terms of text and

²⁸ On his 1959 EP *Piove (Chao, Chao Bambina)*, Guardiola sings several songs translated into Catalan including one that won the Sanremo Festival

²⁹ A lot has been written about Serrat's bilingualism and the 1968 Eurovision episode, with divergent interpretations. A quite impartial summary can be found in Casas (1972, pp.139-157) and recent declarations of Serrat himself in (Martínez and Sales, 2013, p.202).

melodic line, he soon handed over musical arrangements and orchestration to a few trusted professionals from a variety of musical backgrounds. For instance, Ricard Miralles and (more occasionally) Francesc Burrull elaborated his songs with controversial jazzy and funky touches, as can be heard in the bass lines and the brass orchestration of the LP, *Homenaje a Antonio Machado* (1969). Juan Carlos Calderón, an up-and-coming arranger by the end of the 1960s, provided a peculiar quality inspired by the new pop ballad with occasional winks to classic jazz, as in the hugely successful *Mediterráneo* (1971).³⁰ Serrat's songs never avoid addressing mass audiences, an attitude which went hand in hand with an abiding commitment to freedom and opposition to dictatorship in Spain and Latin America. Serrat's songs and career thus challenged the idea that 'commercial song' and *canción de autor* were diametrically opposed concepts.

Coda

The Spanish *cantautor* came at a time of rapid socio-economic changes in the country. The widely accepted historical narrative establishes a stark opposition between *canción de autor* and commercial melodic song during the 1960s and 1970s. On the one hand, this narrative underplays the role of other options, such as some rock bands (like Smash or Triana), who were equally opposed to the dictatorial regime. On the other hand, the *canción de autor* did not grow outside the industrial and media infrastructures of Francoist Spain, and participated in official song contests, radio and television broadcasts, etc. While *cantautores* emerged with distinct political and aesthetic attitudes, the *canción de autor* and the light melodic song scenes intersected and coexisted over and above their ideological differences. That said, in Spain, *cantautores* would be forever associated with the musical, ethical and aesthetic connotations it possessed during the 1960s and 1970s. The deep and genuine political and social commitment of these *cantautores* would make them heroes for the anti-Franco movement. The recognition for its courageous social and political commitment would be the *canción de autor's* greatest strength. It would also be the movement's weakness, since neither its semantic connotations nor its aesthetic model would survive the forthcoming democracy.

Works Cited

- Alonso, C., 1998. *La Canción Lírica Española en el siglo XIX*. Madrid: ICCMU.
- Alonso, C., 2010. *Creación musical, cultura popular y construcción nacional en la España contemporánea*. Madrid: ICCMU.
- Ayats, J., and Salicrú-Maltas, M., 2013. Singing against the Dictatorship (1959-1975): the Nova Cançó. In: S. Martínez and H. Fouce, eds. *Made in Spain: Studies in Popular Music*. New York: Routledge. pp.28-41.

³⁰ About the musical model of the new ballads emerging throughout Latin America and Spain in the late 1960s, see Party (2003).

- Benet, J., 1979. *Cataluña bajo el régimen franquista: Informe sobre la persecución de la lengua y la cultura catalana por el régimen del general Franco*. Barcelona: Editorial Blume.
- Boyle, C., 1995. The Politics of Popular Music: On the Dynamics of the New Song. In: H. Graham and J. Labany, eds. *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction. The Struggle for Modernity*. Oxford University Press. pp. 291-294.
- Casas, Á., 1972. *45 revoluciones en España (1960-1970)*. Barcelona: Dopesa.
- Cimadevilla, M., *La edad de oro de los cantautores asturianos*. s.l.: El Cantadero del Urogallo.
- Claudín, V., 1981. *Canción de autor en España. Apuntes para su historia*. Madrid: Júcar.
- Colmeiro, J., 2003. Canciones con historia: Cultural Identity, Historical Memory, and Popular Songs. *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 4(1), pp.31-46.
- Espinàs, J. M., 1974. *Pi de la Serra*. Gijón: Júcar.
- Estornés Zubizarreta, I., s/d. "Michel Labèguerie". *Auñamendi Eusko Entziklopedia*. <http://www.euskomedia.org/aunamendi/83873> (accessed March 22, 2015).
- Ez Dok Amairu, 1970. Programa de mano del espectáculo *Baga, biga, higa*.
- Garcia-Soler, J., 1976. *La Nova Cançó*. Barcelona: Edicions 62.
- Iglesias, I., 2010. *Improvisando la modernidad: el jazz y la España de Franco, de la guerra civil a la guerra fría (1936-1968)*. PhD Thesis, Universidad de Valladolid (Spain).
- Labanyi, J., ed., 2002. *Constructing Identity in Twentieth-Century Spain: Theoretical Debates and Cultural Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lucini, F. G., 1989. *Veinte años de canción en España (1963-1983)*. 4 vols. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre.
- Lucini, F. G., 1998. *Crónica cantada de los silencios rotos: Voces y canciones de autor 1963-1997*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- Manrique, D., 2002. Cantautores. *Un país de música*, vol.2. Disco-libro. Madrid: El País.
- Martínez, S., 2013. Stick to the Copla! Recovering Old Spanish Popular Songs. In: S. Martínez and H. Fouce, eds., *Made in Spain: Studies in Popular Music*. New York: Routledge. pp.90-100.
- Martínez, S., and Sales, A., 2013. Afterword. Mediterranean Love Songs: A Conversation with Joan Manuel Serrat. In: S. Martínez and H. Fouce, eds. *Made in Spain: Studies in Popular Music*. New York: Routledge. pp.196-204.
- Ortiz, C., 1999. The Uses of Folklore by the Franco Regime. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 112 (446), pp.479-496.
- Party, D., 2003. Transnacionalización y la balada latinoamericana. Paper presented at the Segundo Congreso Chileno de Musicología, Santiago de Chile, January 17. Available at: <https://sites.google.com/site/dparty/conference-presentations/transnacionalizacion> (accessed January 20, 2015).
- Pérez Zalduondo, G., 2006. Ideología y política en las instituciones musicales españolas. *Quintana. Revista de estudios do Departamento de Historia da Arte*, 5, pp.145-156.
- Romano, M., 2009. L'orbayu nos llabios: Notas sobre la canción de autor asturiana. In: *Actes del II Conceyu Internacional de Lliteratura Asturiana. Uviéu. 5, 6, 7 y 8 de payares 2007*. Uviéu: Academia de la Llingua Asturiana.
- Salaverri, F., 2005. *Solo éxitos 1959-2002: Año a año*. Madrid: Iberautor.
- Steingress, G., 2006. *Y Carmen se fue a París*. Córdoba: Almuzara.

Townson, N., ed., 2007. *Spain Transformed: The Late Franco Dictatorship, 1959-75*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Vázquez Montalbán, M., [1973] 2010. *Joan Manuel Serrat*. Barcelona: Nortésur.

Vázquez Montalbán, M., 1989. Prólogo. In: F. G. Lucini. *Veinte años de canción en España (1963-1983)*, Vol. 3: *Los problemas sociales y la solidaridad*. Madrid: Edicions de la Torre. pp.7-8.

Washabaugh, W., 2012. *Flamenco Music and National Identity in Spain*. Farnham: Ashgate.