

DOMESTIC OPERA IN TONADILLAS: OPERATIC PRACTICE IN THE HOME, AS SEEN IN SHORT LYRIC COMEDY IN EIGHTEENTH- CENTURY SPAIN

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INTRODUCTION

Our understanding of opera performance in eighteenth-century Spain is constantly expanding.¹ However, one aspect which has so far received little attention is the impact of opera on society. We here set out to approach it using information provided by another contemporary genre of musical theatre, similar but distinct: the *tonadilla*. This was a type of sung intermezzo, extremely popular across Spain (America included) during the second half of the eighteenth century. It consisted of a series of sung numbers, usually with very entertaining plots drawn from everyday life. Thanks to recent research, this highly original genre has become known beyond Spain's borders, the world over.²

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- 1 See, for example, EMILIO CASARES – ÁLVARO TORRENTE (eds.): *La ópera en España e Hispanoamérica*, 2 vols. Madrid: Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, 2001. – RAINER KLEINERTZ: *Grundzüge des spanischen Musiktheaters im 18. Jahrhundert. Opera, Comedia und Zarzuela*. Kassel: Reichenberger, 2003. – EMILIO CASARES: *La ópera en España. Procesos de recepción y modelos de creación*, vol. 1. Madrid: Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, 2018.
 - 2 REBECCA HAIDT: *Women, Work and Clothing in Eighteenth-Century Spain*. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2011. – ELISABETH LE GUIN: *The Tonadilla in Performance*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2014. For the state of the art see AURÈLIA

One of the most attractive aspects of the tonadilla is the way it holds a mirror up to contemporary society, albeit a deforming one due to its humorous intent and its nature as musical theatre. In this sense, the presence of opera within tonadillas is especially interesting, be it as subject matter, as a more or less parodied musical influence, or even as a vehicle for particular singers to show off their talents. The aim of this essay is thus to analyse how the tonadilla could itself become a metatheatrical and metamusical *space* for opera. This will be done, given the theme of this tome, by focusing on works set in domestic *spaces* used for opera, from singing lessons to private performances.

TONADILLA AND OPERA IN CONTEXT

In order to understand the presence of opera in tonadillas, we should put the relationship between the genres into context. The tonadilla is – even today – lumbered with the ideological burden of being considered a bulwark of musical *Spanishness* – the “grito de indigenismo simpático contra el extranjerismo de la ópera” as Felipe Pedrell vehemently put it,³ mortally wounded, according to José Subirá’s well-known thesis, by pernicious foreign influence, especially Italian opera.⁴ Recent research shows this black-and-white reading to be inaccurate, revealing the existence between both extremes of a rich range of greys born of the fertile and stimulating dialectic between the homegrown and the foreign, the local and the cosmopolitan, the

PESSARRODONA: “La tonadilla hoy: tres visiones desde el extranjero”, *Matèria* 9 (2015), pp. 179-186.

3 FELIPE PEDRELL: *Teatro lírico español anterior al siglo XIX*, vol. 1. La Coruña: Canuto Barea, 1897, p. xiii.

4 This theory is further developed in JOSÉ SUBIRÁ: *La tonadilla escénica*, 3 vols. Madrid: Tipografía de Archivos, 1928–1930.

traditional and the modern, the popular and the elitist, and so on.⁵

This is especially evident in the case of Italy. As I have commented elsewhere,⁶ tonadillas show an interesting love-hate relationship with Italy. On the one hand, the Italian is a target of mockery: the surfeit of “warbling”, the exaggerated expression of affected emotions, Italian stereotypes such as the charlatan or the abbé who had studied at the University of Bologna, jokes about Italian food, and so forth. In general, the Italian is associated with superficiality, as opposed to the straightforward sincerity of the *majo*. On the other hand, however, we find Italian elements both in the musical style and the dramaturgy of the tonadilla – and, indeed, even Italian performers – from its very origins.⁷ As Julio Gómez, writing in 1913 on tonadilla composers, stated: “la generación nueva de músicos abiertos a las corrientes modernas del arte se educaron, como no podía ser menos de

5 See, for example, LE GUIN: *The Tonadilla in Performance*, 2014, and AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA: “El estilo musical de la tonadilla escénica dieciochesca y su relación con la ópera italiana a través de la obra de Jacinto Valledor (1744–1809)”, *Revista de Musicología* 30/1 (2007), pp. 9-48. – AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA: “Concertantes, finales y acción en las tonadillas de Jacinto Valledor (1744–1809)”, *Nassarre* 31 (2015), pp. 101-138. – AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA: “Macarrones en tonadillas: representaciones musicales de lo italiano en el teatro lírico breve del siglo XVIII hispánico”, *Intercambios musicales entre Italia y España en los siglos XVIII y XIX / Gli scambi musicali fra Italia e Spagna nei secoli XVIII e XIX*, ed. VÍCTOR SÁNCHEZ. Bologna: Ut Orpheus, 2019, pp. 259-287.

6 *Ibidem*.

7 See AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA: “Guerrero y Misón en la conformación de la tonadilla como género teatral autónomo”, *Estudios en torno a Luis Misón*, ed. EADEM and GERMÁN LABRADOR. Sant Cugat del Vallès: Arpeggio, in preparation.

suceder, en la música italiana”.⁸ Thus it should be noted that the presence of opera in this study is strictly limited to the use of operatic elements as explicit references to Italian melodrama. Indeed, the tonadilla coincided in space and time with opera, albeit in a somewhat irregular manner, especially in the case of Madrid. The tonadilla is considered to have emerged as an autonomous dramatic musical genre around 1757, with the company of María Hidalgo in Madrid.⁹ From that moment, and especially from the 1760s onwards, the short genre would become an obligatory feature of entertainments at public theatres in Spain, at least until the Peninsular War, although some older works held the stage well into the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Its origin, therefore, coincides with the end of the Farinelli era at the theatres of the Buen Retiro and Aranjuez (1747–1758), and its later development with the entertainments at the Royal Sites under the reform by the Count of Aranda (1767), which saw many regular tonadilla performers taking part in high-level zarzuelas, both serious and comic. With the closure of these theatres in 1777, Madrid was bereft of opera until 1783, when, under the initiative of the Countess-Duchess of Benavente, the company of Eusebio Ribera staged works by authors such as Cimarosa and Paisiello, performed by famous

8 JULIO GÓMEZ: “Don Blas de Laserna. Un capítulo de la historia del teatro lírico español en la vida del último tonadillero”, *Escritos de Julio Gómez*, ed. ANTONIO IGLESIAS. Madrid: Alpuerto, 1986, p. 69.

9 PESSARRODONA: “Guerrero y Misón en la conformación de la tonadilla como género teatral autónomo”, in preparation.

10 AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA: “La impressió de llibrets de *tonadillas* a les terres de parla catalana: d’*El sacristán y la viuda* (1773) a *Cheroni i Bartoleta o La viuda i l’escolà* de Bernat i Baldoví (1860)”, *Teatre breu: procediments, formes i contextos*, ed. ISABEL MARCILLAS and NÚRIA SANTAMARIA. Valencia: Universidad de Valencia, 2013, pp. 51-72.

tonadilla artists such as Catalina Tordesillas, who was Italian,¹¹ or the excellent *gracioso* – comic actor – Miguel Garrido.¹² This continued until 1787, when the Teatro de los Caños del Peral, specialised in Italian opera and with a native Italian company, reopened.¹³

In other cities, we see an interesting movement between genres, at least in the most important theatres with resident opera companies. In Barcelona, for instance, Italian artists such as Rosina Vaglini and Girolamo Vedova frequently sang tonadillas.¹⁴ In fact, in Barcelona, the tonadilla was used as a cheap, local lyric alternative to opera when, whether for economic or ideological reasons, the Casa de Comedias dispensed with its Italian opera company.¹⁵

In this context, it should be remembered that lyric entertainments were not limited to the professional world of public theatres. For example, the sale of opera arias as well as

11 See EMILIO COTARELO: *Don Ramón de la Cruz y sus obras: ensayo biográfico y bibliográfico*. Madrid: Imprenta de José Perales y Martínez, 1899, pp. 600-602.

12 On Miguel Garrido as a performer of tonadillas see AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA: “El cuerpo cantante en las tonadillas a solo para Miguel Garrido”, *Diagonal: An Ibero-American Music Review* 4/2 (2019); <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1673z6wk>.

13 For a general panorama of operatic activity in Madrid during these years see EMILIO COTARELO: *Orígenes y establecimiento de la ópera en España hasta 1800*. Madrid: Imp. de Manuel Minuesa de los Ríos, 1917.

14 See AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA: “La tonadilla a Barcelona al voltant dels anys 1780: el segon període de Jacinto Valledor”, *Revista Catalana de Musicologia* 8 (2015), pp. 103-135.

15 See AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA: “Catálogo descriptivo de libretos de tonadillas impresos en Barcelona en el siglo XVIII”, *Recerca Musicològica* 16 (2006), pp. 17-63: 31-32. – EADEM: *La tonadilla escénica a través del compositor Jacinto Valledor (1744–1809)*, vol. 1. Diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2010, ch. 3.

tonadillas and seguidillas performed in theatres is recorded in the Madrid press.¹⁶ In Catalonia, other clues suggest possible domestic performances of tonadillas, such as the anomalously high volume of librettos printed in Barcelona between 1733 and 1775, or accounts of performances in theatres of artisans or the nobility.¹⁷ In this sense, the recently-studied case of the Conill family in Olot is especially revealing, proving the cultivation of fragments of opera as well as tonadillas by members of Catalonia's lesser aristocracy in the early nineteenth century, in areas seemingly far removed from the main centres of theatrical activity.¹⁸

THE TONADILLA AS A SPACE FOR OPERA

Given the close contextual relationship between both genres, it is hardly surprising that the tonadilla should provide a *space for opera*, somewhere it too could be present in this lively eighteenth-century entertainment.¹⁹ Having analysed a

16 See JOSÉ MÁXIMO LEZA – MIGUEL ÁNGEL MARÍN: “1730–1759: la asimilación del escenario europeo”, *Historia de la música en España e Hispanoamérica*, vol. 4: *La música en el siglo XVIII*, ed. JOSÉ MÁXIMO LEZA. Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2014, pp. 223-352: 320.

17 See AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA: “La *tonadilla* a la Barcelona del darrer terç del Set-cents més enllà de la Casa de Comèdies”, *Scripta* 3 (June 2014), pp. 122-142.

18 See AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA: “Cimarosa a la Garrotxa: recepció i pràctica domèstica de l'òpera italiana del segle XVIII i inicis del XIX a Olot”, *Revista Catalana de Musicologia* 12 (2019), pp. 223-258; <http://revistes.iec.cat/index.php/RCMus/article/view/146218>.

19 It is not unlikely that influence might have travelled the other way too, as the interesting case of Paisiello's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* suggests: in its Madrid performances, Bartolo's *seghidiglia spagnuola* was replaced with *No me llamo Entramoro*, a very popular song inserted into one of the older tonadillas, by Luis Misón (1760), as I explained in my paper “Il ritorno di Figaro in patria: recezione ed adattamenti de *Il Barbiere di*

considerable number of tonadillas featuring references to Italian opera,²⁰ I have been able to establish that it is usually present in

Siviglia di Paisiello alle scene spagnole tra la fine del Settecento e inizio dell'Ottocento”, *XXIV Convegno Annuale della Società Italiana di Musicologia* (Lucca, 22–22 October 2017) (not published).

- 20 The consulted tonadillas (all of them in the Biblioteca Histórica Municipal de Madrid = BHM) are the following: BLAS DE LASERNA: *El maestro de cantar*, a 2 (1775), Mus 101-21; *La señorita apasionada a la música*, a solo (1780), Mus 91-24; *El deseo de la Pulpillo*, a solo (1781), Mus 86-13; *Francés, italiano y majos o El triunfo de las mujeres*, a 4 (1781), Mus 151-4; *La cómica y la operista*, a 3 (1783), Mus 125-10; *El café de Cádiz*, a 3 (1786), Mus 132-4; *El maestro inglés*, fin de fiesta (1786), Mus 189-10; *Los celos de Paco*, a 3 (1788), Mus 123-5; *La dama maja*, a 2 (1794), Mus 109-11; *La italiana y la andaluza*, a 3 (1796), Mus 129-12; *Las preocupaciones*, a 3 (1801), Mus 119-13; *Lección de música y bolero*, a 4 (1803), Mus 128-9, published in JAVIER SUÁREZ PAJARES (ed.): *Tonadillas (I)*. Madrid: Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, 1998, pp. 141-204; *El cortejo de moda*, a 3 (1804), Mus 120-9; *El abate burlado y el paje astuto*, a 3 (s.a.), Mus 126-10; *La academia*, a solo (s.a.), Mus 80-6; *Al arma, al arma todos*, folla or tonadilla general (s.a.), Mus 155-13; *El café de Barcelona*, a 2 (s.a.), Mus 166-3; *Los caprichos*, a 4 (s.a.), Mus 148-2; *Hipólita y Narciso*, a 3 (s.a.), Mus 122-13; *El maestro de ópera o El consuelo de Mintegui*, a 3 (s.a.), Mus 131-12; *El maestro y las discípulas*, a 3 (s.a.), Mus 146-6; *El majo y los tres [dos] hermanos*, a 3 (1800), Mus 131-8; *Señores atención*, a solo (s.a.), Mus 168-14. – PABLO ESTEVE: *La parmesana y las majas*, a 4 (1765), Mus 176-2; *La dama y el abate*, a 2 (1778), Mus 180-2; *El cuento del Prado con el italiano*, a solo (1780), Mus 168-16; *La lección de tonadas*, a solo (1780), Mus 110-1; *Las lecciones*, segunda parte, a 2 (1780), Mus 114-10; *¡Ay, mosqueteros!*, a 2 (1781), Mus 96-2; *El novio simple y dos hermanas*, a 3 (1781), Mus 135-1; *La escuela de Garrido*, general (1783), Mus 178-18; *La extranjera*, a solo (1786), Mus 93-11; *La operista fingida*, a 3 (1786), Mus 138-5; *Los maestros de la Ronquillo*, a 3 (1788), Mus 184-6. – PABLO DEL MORAL: *El maestro de música*, a 3 (1790), Mus 135-5; *La prueba*, a solo (1792), Mus 89-11; *De fuera vendrá*, a 3 (1797), Mus 137-6; *El impresario*, a 4 (1797), Mus 153-2; *El pretendiente de amor*, a 3 (1801), Mus 138-4; *Los majos y*

intradiegetic pieces – that is, sung within the fiction itself – often intended to showcase the vocal ability of exceptionally good singers (such as Lorenza Correa or Vicente Sánchez Camas), or comic talent (as was the case with Miguel Garrido or other especially comic actors, like Polonia Rochel).

Many of these works date from after 1783, which might suggest a link between this phenomenon and the more or less regular presence of opera in Madrid's public theatres. Although this would provide an excellent *hypotext*, and an easy target for caricature, there are a significant number of earlier cases, some even dating from the origin of the genre, as we shall see. It can therefore reasonably be inferred that though absent from the Madrid stage, opera was “in the air”, so to speak, at least at some levels of society.

currutacos, a 5 (s.a.), Mus 156-7. – ANTONIO ROSALES: *Los cortejos burlados*, a 5 (1780), Mus 187-7; *El llanto y traza de Coronado*, general (s.a.), Mus 187-6; *El maestro de música*, a 3 (s.a.), Mus 182-18; *El recitado*, a 3 (s.a.), Mus 170-8. – JACINTO VALLEDOR: *Señores, señoras*, a solo (1775), Mus 75-2; *El italiano fingido*, a 2 (1786), Mus 117-8; *La maestra y la discípula*, a 4 (c.1776/1796–1797 version), Mus 173-6; *Los genios opuestos*, a 3 (1787), Mus 123-17. – Other composers, with fewer works: LUIS MISÓN: *Los maestros*, a 6 (1758), Mus 174-18. – JAIME PALOMINO: *El autor de Florencia*, a 2 (1775), Mus 105-11. – JOSÉ CASTEL: *La maestra y la discípula*, a 2 (1779), Mus 168-18. – ISIDRO LAPORTA: *La sombra chinesca*, general (1791), Mus 162-2. – FERNANDO FERANDIERE: *La viuda engañada*, a 3 (1782), Mus 122-5. – JUAN MARCOLINI: *El maestro de cantar*, a 2 (s.a.), Mus 112-7. – ANONYMOUS: *El operista y el empresario*, a 3 (s.a.), Mus 140-5; *La operista y el cómico*, a 3 (1784), Mus 100-11; *El forastero y los payos*, first part, a 3 (1775), Mus 127-8; *La peregrina viajante*, a solo (1776), Mus 86-5; *La cavatina*, a solo (1777), Mus 94-17; *Los chascos de Pantalón*, general (1778), Mus 181-15; *La contienda*, a 3 (1779), Mus 122-1; *La dama y el cadete*, a 2 (1779), Mus 167-16; *La prueba de los cantores*, a 2 (1793), Mus 177-11; *La miscelánea*, a solo (s.a.), Mus 92-13; *Las pretensiones de Camas y Márquez*, a 2 (s.a.), Mus 111-7; *El solfeo*, a 2 (s.a.), Mus 112-17.

Whatever the case, analysis of this repertoire allows us to set out the following motives for the inclusion of an opera fragment in a tonadilla:

1) OPERA ARIAS AS METAMUSICAL MEANS TO REPRESENT ITALIAN CHARACTERS

This was the most common use, as seen in *El forastero y los payos* (first and second parts) by Esteve; *El café de Cádiz*, *El majo y los dos hermanos*, *La italiana y la andaluza*, and *El majo y la italiana fingida* by Laserna; and *El italiano fingido y La maestra y la discípula* by Valledor, etc. As a short lyric genre, the tonadilla requires great economy in the presentation of characters, usually stereotypes and caricatures. The simplest way to identify Italians was to present them with an Italian aria, which could also be used to highlight some ridiculous trait, often their extreme affectation and shallowness.²¹

2) TONADILLAS FEATURING OPERISTAS

Opera singers, known as *operistas*, stand out among the previous characters. These singers were usually rivals of other characters, as in *La operista y la cómica* or *Los celos de Paco*, both by Laserna. Also of interest are the tonadillas featuring impresarios who have to judge the relative merits of auditioning singers and actors, as in the anonymous *El operista y el empresario*, and *El Impresario*, by Pablo del Moral, in which Miguel Garrido humorously showcased his talents as both singer and actor.

Elsewhere, we find local actors trying to emulate opera singers, with some success, as in Jacinto Valledor's amusing *Señores*,

21 On the musical representation of Italian stereotypes in tonadillas see PESSARRODONA: "Macarrones en tonadillas", 2019.

señoras, where Francisca Laborda's attempt to sing an Italian cavatina leads to a comical vocal accident.²²

3) ITALIAN ARIAS AS VEHICLES FOR A SINGER'S VOCAL ABILITY

Opera arias were inserted into some tonadillas as an excuse to showcase a particular singer's vocal talents, with perhaps only tenuous dramatic justification. We should remember that this context produced singers with important international careers, such as Manuel García, who made a very comical appearance in the tonadilla *Los pretendientes de amor* by Pablo del Moral as a tenor afraid of making mistakes, or Lorenza Correa, a celebrated singer who, after appearing on the Madrid stage, went on to enjoy a successful European career. We find her singing arias in works such as *Los caprichos* and *Hipólita y Narciso* by Laserna, or *El novio simple y las dos hermanas* by Pablo Esteve, originally composed for "Garrido, Tordesillas and la Sanz" but later reused for Correa and her sister Petronila.

Another great tenor was Vicente Sánchez Camas, who performed opera fragments in *De fuera vendrá* by Pablo del Moral, or the highly interesting *La miscelánea*, a rare case of tonadilla for solo male performer.²³

22 See AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA: "Cuerpo tonadillesco, cuerpo cantante: una aproximación al teatro musical breve de la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII hispánico", *Música y cuerpo. Estudios musicológicos*, ed. TERESA CASCUDO. Logroño: Calanda, 2015, pp. 109-142. – JACINTO VALLEDOR: *Tonadillas*, vol. 1: *Obras del periodo 1768–1778*, ed. AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2019, pp. 271-291.

23 On the role of gender in tonadillas *a solo* see AURELIA PESSARRODONA: "La mujer como mujer en la tonadilla a solo dieciochesca", *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 93/2 (2016), pp. 211-238. – EADEM: "El cuerpo cantante en las tonadillas a solo para Miguel Garrido", 2019.

4) ITALIAN ARIAS SUNG CASUALLY

In other tonadillas, opera is shown in a domestic setting, with a character singing at home in the Italian style for no particular reason, as in *El cortejo de moda* by Laserna, *La viuda engañada* by Ferandiere, or *El pretendiente de amor* by Moral. Although not as evident as in the previous section, these cases might also have showcased the talents of specific singers.

5) ARIAS INSERTED INTO WORKS CONSISTING OF A SUCCESSION OF UNCONNECTED NUMBERS

These are large-scale works (tonadillas *generales*, *misceláneas* or *follas*) with a succession of sung – and sometimes danced – numbers with no actual plot. One amusing example is *El llanto y traza de Coronado* by Antonio Rosales, in which a hilarious *Capon of Denmark* sings an aria, or *Al arma, al arma todos* by Laserna, featuring a “canon con dulzaina de Pergolesi”.

6) TONADILLAS FEATURING SINGING TEACHERS

In this interesting group, we find both private singing lessons in a domestic setting – as will be seen later in more detail – and professional actors intent on improving their singing. The latter can provide especially amusing situations, as in *Los maestros de la Ronquillo* by Esteve, in which a teacher announces a singing lesson “a lo operista *arrondonao*” “un minué *arrastrao*”. Esteve also created both parts of *Las lecciones* for Nicolasa Palomera. In the second, Miguel Garrido gives a hilarious singing lesson, performing seguidillas ‘in a woman’s tone’ (“en tono de mujer”).

Among these tonadillas, it is worth mentioning *La maestra y la discípula* by José Castel (1779), in which the teacher, a woman, shows an actress – Gertrudis Valdés – how to sing. It is interesting that the teacher was Catalina Tordesillas, who,

despite her surname, was in fact Italian.²⁴ Unfortunately, the music for the cavatina which Valdés sings in the lesson is missing from the manuscript score, but in the previous number, the teacher makes her presentation with seguidillas whose great melodic difficulty confirms her excellent vocal skills.

7) TONADILLAS FEATURING PERFORMANCES OF OPERA FRAGMENTS

As we shall see below, some tonadillas even included amusing rehearsals and performances of opera fragments, as in *La ópera casera* by Pablo del Moral or *Los caprichos* and *La prueba de los cantores* by Laserna.

These sung numbers often imitate the style and format of Italian arias, especially two-part arias and cavatinas – but never *da capo* arias, as their format was too large for the short tonadilla. However, given the parodic nature of the genre, these real references (*hypotexts*) were deformed to suit the humorous intention of the scene. Based on our analysis of the repertoire, these operatic quotations can be classified according to the degree of deformation as follows:

- *Literal quotation*

In several cases, the quoted aria has been identified, such as “Tre giorni son che Nina”, attributed variously to Pergolesi or Ciampi, which appears in *La maestra y la discípula* by Valledor as a serenade the Italian sings to his lover, or “Lei comandi, signorina” from *Il pittore parigino* by Cimarosa, sung by the aspiring buffo, as we shall see later. Other, as yet unidentified examples may also be literal quotations.

24 See COTARELO: *Don Ramón de la Cruz y sus obras*, 1899, pp. 600-602.

- *Identifiable texts*
 These are arias whose texts can be identified, though not their music. This occurs with texts by Metastasio which appear in Laserna tonadillas, such as the aria “Ecco quel fiero istante” in *El novio simple y las dos hermanas*, “Dal mio ben lontano” in *Hipólita y Narciso*, and “Se ti perdo, amato oggetto” in *El majo y los dos hermanos*. Although their music might be new, once again we cannot rule out the possibility that they might also have been literal quotations of lesser-known versions.
- *Parodic quotations with humorous intent*
 Quotations of opera arias could be used as clear parody, as seen in “Mi volete? Dite sì” from *L’isola d’Alcina* by Gazzaniga, which is sung by the character of the Englishman in *Los genios opuestos* by the same composer. This last case is especially interesting because, exceptionally, the aria is not used to identify an Italian, but an Englishman. It is used for the same purpose in *El café de Cádiz* by Laserna, but in a Spanish translation. This matches its use in the original opera, where it is sung by the Englishman James, so that although there is no evidence that this opera was performed in Spanish theatres, it is quite possible that its plot and the purpose of this aria were somehow known.²⁵ Among these parodic quotations of opera, we find significant cases of cross-dressing, in which an aria intended for one sex is performed by the other in the tonadilla. This curiously occurs in several numbers from *La Cecchina* by Piccinni, such as Paoluccia’s “Che superbia maledetta”, sung by Miguel Garrido in

25 See PESSARRODONA: “Macarrones en tonadillas”, 2019, pp. 276-278.

La operista fingida by Esteve, or the peculiar song “Yo estar tudesco, yo estar alemán” sung by Polonia Rochel in *Los avaros* by Ferandiere, with clear echoes of Capitano Tagliaferro’s arias. Similarly, the aria “Per una picca, per un puntiglio”, sung by the Capitano in *Il finto pazzo per amore* by Sacchini, is also performed by Polonia Rochel in *La cómica y la operista* by Laserna.

– *Deforming caricature*

In these cases, the reference is rendered laughable through exaggerated caricature. We have an excellent example in the very amusing ‘nocturne by the most venerable Yomeli [sic]’ (“nocturno del colendísimo Yomeli”) which appears in *La operista y el cómico* by Blas de Laserna, a piece which consists in a persistent and absurd repetition of the words “qui potis, qui non potis, miserere mei” with raucous laughter interspersed. It is afterwards suggested the possible cause of this nonsense might be some eyesight problem suffered by the character, who is unable to read the score properly (figs. 1 and 2).

[Pessarrodona-1 and 2]

Figs 1 and 2: opening of the number “Qui potis, qui non potis” from *La operista y el cómico* by Laserna (only voice and bass).

DOMESTIC SINGING LESSONS IN TONADILLAS

There is, therefore, a significant presence of opera in tonadillas, sometimes included in the fictional plots as an element of imitated/parodied reality. Fine examples of this are the tonadillas featuring singing teachers giving private lessons, as in *Los maestros* by Luis Misón; *El maestro de cantar* by Marcolini; *El abate burlado y el paje astuto*, *El maestro de cantar*, and *El maestro de ópera o El consuelo de Mintegui* by

Laserna; *El tío celoso y maestro de cantar* by Medrano; *El maestro de música* by Pablo del Moral; or *El italiano fingido* by Valledor.²⁶

The presence of the singing teacher in this repertoire might merely be a pretext to set up the scene of a meeting – and possible seduction – between a man and a woman, even without the singing lesson itself. Indeed, the music lesson had become something of a trope among painters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries like Vermeer, Ter Borch, Fragonard, or Watteau, as it allowed placing a male figure and a female figure together in the same domestic space.²⁷ Something similar can be seen in the contemporary operatic and theatrical repertoire, as in *The Barber of Seville* by Beaumarchais and its different operatic versions, also present in Spanish theatres.²⁸

However, these plots did reflect the reality of singing lessons taken by ladies.²⁹ Although the pedagogical texts of the day – aimed primarily at distinguished ladies – advocated a home-centred female education, they also allowed for training in certain ornamental or performance skills – or accomplishments – such as dance, music, painting, or drawing, useful as a form of occupying their leisure time or pleasing at gatherings, balls, or

26 On this *tonadilla* see AURÈLIA PESSARRODONA: *Jacinto Valledor y la tonadilla (1744–1809): un músico de teatro en la España ilustrada*. Sant Cugat del Vallès: Arpegio, 2018, pp. 220-223. – EADEM: “Macarrones en tonadillas”, 2019, pp. 265-266.

27 See JOSEMI LORENZO: “La lección de música o las discípulas incautas con maestro seductor. Bosquejo histórico de un tópico pictórico, literario... y de una realidad”, *Audio Clásica* 163 (January 2011), pp.: 80-85: 84.

28 As I explained in my paper “Il ritorno di Figaro in patria”, 2017.

29 On this topic see, for example, JOSEBA ENDIKA BERROCAL: “Consideraciones sobre la enseñanza musical privada en el Bilbao dieciochesco: el bajonista Lorenzo de Aranda y su entorno familiar y profesional”, *Bidebarrieta* 3 (1998), pp. 233-256.

musical soirées.³⁰ In the words of Josefa de Amar y Borbón, one of the leading guides in the matter, for women:

“Cualquiera habilidad es recomendable: lo primero, porque ninguna se adquiere sin ingenio; y lo segundo, porque puede servir de medio para evitar la ociosidad tan perjudicial en las mujeres como en los hombres. Es cierto que todas las habilidades no merecen igual aprecio: hay unas más dignas que otras; la diferencia consiste en la mayor o menor capacidad que requieren para su desempeño [...]. Así, la señorita que tuviere mejor disposición para el dibujo y para la música que para las letras deberá aplicarse a aquellas y dejar estas. El dibujo y la música tienen su mérito particular, y no se puede ser eminente en ellas sin un cierto grado de ingenio, de invención y de delicadeza de gusto poco común.”³¹

Josefa de Amar’s model female would be a knowledgeable housewife, an educated woman, and a sociable lady perfectly at ease with her peers.³² However, a little further on, Amar is more specific regarding musical education:

“Atendiendo pues a lo dicho, será conveniente que aprendan la música las que tengan afición y disposición para ello. La música instrumental es más útil que la vocal, porque se puede ejercitar a solas, y por consiguiente es un recurso en varias ocasiones. La vocal no divierte tanto al que la ejercita como al que la oye, ni

30 See MÓNICA BOLUFER: *Mujeres e Ilustración: la construcción de la feminidad en la España del siglo XVIII*. Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 1998, pp. 156-157.

31 JOSEFA DE AMAR Y BORBÓN: *Discurso sobre la educación física y moral de las mujeres*. Madrid: Imprenta de Benito Cano, 1790, pp. 198-199; Biblioteca Digital Hispánica, <http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000080910&page=1>.

32 See BOLUFER: *Mujeres e Ilustración*, 1998, p. 158.

es tan regular que se conserva pasado un cierto número de años. No es esto disminuir su mérito: lo tiene y muy grande una buena voz, y más que está acompañada de los primores del arte; pero cuando se busca la propia utilidad en la instrucción se ha de procurar también depender lo menos que se pueda de los otros, y en las mujeres siempre es peligroso cultivar habilidades que requieren mucha comparsa.”³³

Indeed, a woman’s musical education was seen to imply potential risks, the most evident being contact with a male teacher.³⁴ These situations were a favourite breeding ground for the plots of most of these tonadillas. They appear as the tonadilla emerges as an autonomous musical genre, as can be seen in the anonymous music for the sainete *El autor loco* (1757),³⁵ which includes the tonadilla – at the time, still a loose song within a longer work – “Un músico enamorado”, featuring a teacher and his female pupil in a very amusing solfege lesson full of double entendre.

Something of the sort happens a year later in *Los maestros* by Luis Misón, one of the first instances of the autonomous tonadilla, now miniature melodramas separated from their host play.³⁶ In this work, the title characters are an Italian-style singing teacher and a French-style dance master, both involved in episodes of seduction with their pupils. The tonadilla opens with the singing lesson, *in medias res* (fig. 3), in which the

33 AMAR Y BORBÓN: *Discurso sobre la educación física y moral de las mujeres*, 1790, p. 200.

34 See CARMEN MARTÍN GAITE: *Usos amorosos del dieciocho en España*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 1987, pp. 41-42. – JUAN PABLO FERNÁNDEZ-CORTÉS: *Mujeres y música en la Casa Ducal de Osuna (siglos XVII–XIX). Coordinadas y documentos para un estudio*. Madrid: Sociedad Española de Musicología, 2011, pp. 27-28.

35 BHM, Mus 60-6.

36 See PESSARRODONA: “Guerrero y Misón en la conformación de la tonadilla como género teatral autónomo”, in preparation.

character played by Catalina Pacheco, alias *Catuja*, sings an Italian aria, “Per pietà, bell’idol mio”³⁷ while her teacher, played by the actor Diego Coronado, gives her instructions in rhythmically declaimed Italian. After reciting the first phrase, she is praised in a spoken *parola* by the teacher, who then invites the other student, Teresa Garrido, to join her, thus turning the initial aria into a sensual duet. In this lesson, the singing teacher only provides instructions regarding style and dynamics and the first student sings a melody in the middle register, which does not extend beyond F#₅ (if we consider the A₄ as the central one), thus avoiding the need to deal with the *passaggio*. The piece does, however, require mastery of attacks (especially on offbeat quavers) and a certain degree of virtuosity and vocal agility, as well as elegance and good taste, which the teacher calls “dolcezza”.

[Pessarrodona-example 1]

Musical example 1: *Los maestros* by Misón, mm. 8-16.³⁸

The most strikingly original moment of the *tonadilla* is, without a doubt, the central *minuete*, in which Misón superimposes the singing and dancing lessons, taking advantage of the musical

37 This is a well-known text by Metastasio for the opera *Artaserse*, set to music by many composers. The music here does not match any of the better-known versions of the opera (Vinci, Hasse, etc.); it might, therefore, belong to another, lesser-known version or be by Misón himself. However, it is very likely that Misón played in the orchestra which performed *Artaserse* by Giovanni Battista Mele (with arias by other composers) in the Teatro del Buen Retiro for the Carnival of 1749. See KLEINERTZ: *Grundzüge des Spanischen Musiktheaters im 18. Jahrhundert*, vol. 2, 2003, pp. 23-24.

38 In these transcriptions I have maintained the horns with original (real) notes and the male voices have been written in G-clef an octave lower, instead of the original C-clef on the first line. The notes in rhythmic recitative are written with a cross-shaped head in order to avoid confusion with bar lines, but they are not sung.

polysemy of the minuet, a dance whose air could inspire opera arias.³⁹ As shown in the appendix 1, the minuet is used as intradiegetic background music against which both Juan Ladvenant's dance lesson for Teresa and Coronado's singing lesson for Catuja are played. Only Catuja sings, while the others recite in rhythmic declamation. This superposition of two parallel scenes in the central minuet is an especially original and daring musical and theatrical feature, all the more so for such an early tonadilla. We will see something similar in *Lección de música y bolero* by Laserna (1801), with a music lesson superimposed on a danced bolero.⁴⁰

This tonadilla, therefore, not only demonstrates Misón's dramaturgical and musical ingenuity in what was then still an experimental genre, but also shows how the Italian style had become integrated with the tonadilla at an early stage, organically fitting into the plot, thus disproving the nationalistic theses mentioned above. This tonadilla demonstrates the integration of Italian music into the soundscape of the time, in well-to-do circles.⁴¹

Another tonadilla based on the relationship between a male singing teacher and a female pupil is *El maestro de cantar* (1775) by Blas de Laserna. It is especially relevant because it

39 On Italian minuet-like arias in later tonadillas see PESSARRODONA: "Macarrones en tonadillas", 2019, pp. 267-268.

40 Cf. LE GUIN: *The Tonadilla in Performance*, 2014, pp. 132-133; see SUÁREZ PAJARES: *Tonadillas (I)*, 1998, pp. 150-154.

41 The composition of this work coincides with the sale of operatic repertoire from the Teatro del Buen Retiro announced in the press (see note 16), as well as the first treatise of modern singing in Spain: *El canto instruido*, dated 1754 and written by Manuel Cavaza, a musician very close to Luis Misón: both were oboists in the orchestras of the Royal Chapel, Buen Retiro, and Royal Sites, and Cavaza was the translator of *La festa cinese* by Metastasio for a version set to music by Misón. See PESSARRODONA: "Guerrero y Misón en la conformación de la tonadilla como género teatral autónomo", in preparation.

shows interest in learning operatic singing in a domestic setting before opera burst onto the scene in Madrid in 1783 and the reopening of the Teatro de los Caños del Peral towards the end of 1786. Laserna was especially concerned with the vocal technique of tonadilla singers, as shown by his proposed creation of a ‘School for Tonadilla Singing’ in 1790, a project which unfortunately was not successful.⁴² In fact, Laserna himself was a singing teacher, with pupils who became excellent performers of tonadillas, such as Joaquina Arteaga, Francisco García, the siblings María Mayor and José Ordóñez (known as *los Mayoritos*), Concepción Lledó, and María Pulpillo, whom he married in 1796.⁴³ In an advertisement in the *Diario de Madrid* on 29 May 1810, Laserna offered his services as music and singing teacher for:

“niños de uno y otro sexo a los cómodos precios de un real de vellón, a los que solo aprendan música, y de dos a los que se dediquen a tocar el fortepiano y estudiar para cantar en el teatro; bien entendido que los niños darán lecciones separados de las niñas.”⁴⁴

Although *El maestro de cantar* was an early tonadilla in Laserna’s output,⁴⁵ it might reflect his pedagogical interest, albeit framed as the seduction scene so typical of these plotlines. Indeed, the teacher introduces himself in the first number with the words “Yo, señores, soy maestro | que enseña a cantar madamas”, and goes on, “Doy si se ofrece un papel | y cuando

42 See GÓMEZ: “Don Blas de Laserna”, 1986, pp. 95-96 and SUBIRÁ: *La tonadilla escénica*, vol. 1, 1928, pp. 316-318.

43 See GÓMEZ: “Don Blas de Laserna”, 1986, p. 95 and 126-127, and SUBIRÁ: *La tonadilla escénica*, vol. 1, 1928, p. 319.

44 Quoted in SUBIRÁ: *La tonadilla escénica*, vol. 1, 1928, p. 227.

45 He began to compose *tonadillas* in 1774. See GÓMEZ: “Don Blas de Laserna”, 1986, p. 108.

no hay nada de esto⁴⁶ | galanteo con el fin | de chuparlas lo que puedo”. The goal of the teacher, and his seduction, is clearly pecuniary, although it is not achieved in the work, which closes with both expressing their love in the final seguidillas.

The singing lesson, reproduced in appendix 2, consists of a solfege exercise, first demonstrated by the teacher, then imitated by the student, combining the names of the notes – in the hexachord system – and vocalises on the vowel “a”. This lesson might show the custom of doing solfege exercises before singing, which also appears in *El recitado* by Antonio Rosales, in which, after the two female pupils have done some solfege, teacher and pupils together announce, in song, what they are about to study: “Y vamos estudiando | la tonadilla nueva”.⁴⁷

However, not all tonadillas featuring singing lessons in the home focus on the relationship between a male teacher and his female pupils. A case in point would be *El maestro de música* by Pablo del Moral (1790), in which the students are not ladies but two brothers, still boys and quite unruly. In this case the teacher is a chapel master, ‘dressed in black’ according to the stage directions, and the two boys, wearing habits, seem to be members of a chapel choir. But the profane repertory the master teaches would rather suggest a reflection (or better said, a parody) of private singing lessons – in this case those given by chapel masters in their own homes to boys – forming part of a progressive shift in music education as it moved from the religious to the civil sphere, a phenomenon related to musical interpretation in intimate contexts, and also performed by men.⁴⁸

46 He no doubt made the money sign, rubbing index finger and thumb together.

47 See SUBIRÁ: *La tonadilla escénica*, vol. 1, 1928, p. 271.

48 About this topic see, for example, ORIOL BRUGAROLAS – XOSÉ AVIÑO: “L’ensenyament musical civil privat a Catalunya entre 1792 I 1838. Noves aportacions al seu estudi”, *Educació I Història: Revista d’Història de l’Educació* 32 (2018), pp. 305-333: 315-316 and 328.

Indeed, singing was also an element of distinction for men of the upper classes.⁴⁹ An example of this type of education is provided by the private amateur concerts organised by the Conill family in Olot in the early eighteenth century, in which the Conill siblings, under sixteen years of age, sang opera fragments in their treble voices.⁵⁰

It is precisely this style of singing which this tonadilla sets out to emulate – or parody – as the brothers were played by the sisters Lorenza and Petronila Correa, with the excellent tenor Vicente Sánchez *Camas* as their teacher. The Correa sisters were famed for their singing – especially Lorenza, as mentioned above. Both had arrived in Madrid from Barcelona in 1787 at a very early age, but soon stood out thanks to their voices.⁵¹

The tonadilla opens with both boys onstage at their solfège exercises, each teasing the other when trying to study. Once their studying is over, they head to the house of their teacher, who enters in the following number. Despite his solemn appearance, the teacher makes his presentation singing highly-ornamented seguidillas boleras – in keeping with Camas’s vocal talent – which start with the words “Soy un maestro de capilla | muy afamado | porque enseño lo que otros | no han enseñado”. He goes on to list what he teaches: “Famosos duetos | enseño italianos | enseño boleras | y enseño el fandango”, which would mean that each of these genres, by then highly stylised,⁵² would

49 It is well-known that in order to produce a “perfect gentleman”, educational establishments offered training in skills associated with the nobility, such as music (singing included), dance, fencing, and horse-riding. See, for example, JON BAGÜÉS: “La música y la danza en los proyectos pedagógicos de la Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País”, *Recerca Musicològica* 8 (1988), pp. 117-131.

50 See PESSARRODONA: “Cimarosa a la Garrotxa”, 2019.

51 See COTARELO: *Don Ramón de la Cruz y su obra*, 1899, pp. 500-501.

52 Seguidillas boleras were a highly-stylised slower version of seguidillas manchegas, both danced and sung, popular in the mid-1780s, as both

all be performed with the same vocal technique, or at least similar ones. He then explains that the two little brothers he is waiting for “están ya bastante | adelantados”, which would justify having them played by the Correa sisters. As soon as they arrive, they launch into the singing lesson, n.º 4 (reproduced in appendix 3), with the boys singing an Italian aria to the words “Deh, consola il mio tormento” and music perhaps written by Moral himself. The lesson plays out in a very different manner from the other tonadillas we have seen: the boys constantly make mistakes, infuriating the teacher. The written music, however, does not show these errors, indicating that both singers would improvise them. This tonadilla therefore provided neither a showcase nor a pretext for a seduction scene, but instead used their exceptional vocal ability to parody children’s singing lessons, through the parallelism set up between the two little brothers and the Correa sisters, whose talent was by then well known to the public.

This repertoire, therefore, allows us a glimpse of opera in a domestic setting, albeit through parody and often salacious plotlines, suggesting a soundscape in which singing lessons would be the norm, especially among the upper classes and mainly among women. The tonadilla would reflect this reality, making use of its lyric nature, like a comically deforming mirror.

REHEARSALS AND PRIVATE PERFORMANCES OF OPERA IN TONADILLAS

MARÍA JOSÉ RUIZ MAYORDOMO and I set out in our joint paper “Tras los pasos del bolero: genealogía de un baile de escuela” at the congress on *Blas de Laserna (1751–1816) en el bicentenario de su muerte. Una mirada sobre el teatro musical de su época* (Madrid, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2016) (not published)

Having looked at education in the art of singing, we now move on to the next stage: its display, once again in a domestic setting. This practice is well documented in this period and included both domestic concerts and full-blown opera performances given by amateur singers, organised mainly by the nobility.⁵³ Several tonadillas also reflect this operatic practice, for instance, *La academia* by Laserna, a tonadilla *a solo* in which the protagonist – the actress Rosa García – recounts her experience at a private concert she attended. Her opening description of the moments prior to the concert rings true as a depiction of wealthy circles, with added satirical commentary: “Después de juntada | una grande orquesta | fueron caballeros | fueron petimetras, | de los convidados | y de los postemas. Después de empezada | dos niñas entraron | a caza de muebles | o de apoderados. | Un cadete entre ellas | entró tan soplado | que hizo tanto aire | que enfrió el estrado”. The concert itself then takes place, with several women singing, each in her corresponding style: the Italian performing a rondò; the woman from Cádiz, tiranas; the Madrid maja, seguidillas boleras. As is often the case in tonadillas *a solo*,⁵⁴ the telling becomes the showing, as it is García herself who performs the concert pieces, the plot becoming a pretext to showcase her ability in different styles.

53 See, for example, FERNÁNDEZ-CORTÉS: *Mujeres y música en la Casa Ducal de Osuna (siglos XVII–XIX)*, 2011. – JUAN PABLO FERNÁNDEZ-CORTÉS – EMILIO ROS-FÁBREGAS: “¿Qué quita a lo noble un airecito de maja? National and gender identities in the zarzuela *Clementina* (1786) by Luigi Boccherini and Ramón de la Cruz”, *Early Music* 40/2 (May 2012), pp. 223-236. – ANA SÁNCHEZ-ROJO: “Comella-Laserna’s *La Cecilia* and Bourbon Ideals of Progress in the Late Spanish Enlightenment”, *Dieciocho* 42/2 (Fall 2019), pp. 299-338. – PESSARRODONA: “Il ritorno di Figaro in patria”, 2017.

54 See PESSARRODONA: “Cuerpo tonadillesco, cuerpo cantante”, 2015, p. 116.

These styles reflect one of the most common tropes of the genre: national and regional styles. The Italian singer is presented in a negative light: “Una italiana más alta | que cualquier cirio pascual | entró haciendo cortesías | sin ningún arte ni sal. | Sacó un rondó y la orquesta | se lo dio con gravedad | y después de repartido | así lo empezó a cantar”. The protagonist then sings the aria performed by the Italian, the rondò “Deh, nel sen dell’idol mio” by Pasquale Anfossi.⁵⁵ There is significant ambiguity in the way things Italian are depicted: on the one hand, the singer’s seriousness and lack of grace are mocked, but on the other, her style of singing is accepted, although the actress may have parodied it in performance.⁵⁶

While in this tonadilla one sole performer depicts the whole concert, other cases feature metatheatrical performances of opera fragments. This occurs in later tonadillas, whose longer and more complex structure allows for the insertion of more highly developed numbers. An interesting case in point is *Los caprichos* by Laserna, whose length and complexity suggest it was composed towards the end of the eighteenth century.⁵⁷ The first stage direction is telling: “Salón. La Lorenza sentada al clave vestida a la italiana, a un lado Paco de petimetre majo ensayando mudanzas de bolero con castañuelas”. The tonadilla

55 See, for example, the manuscript housed in the Lübeck Stadtbibliothek, Mus Q 125 (RISM ID n. 452010785); http://digital.stadtbibliothek.luebeck.de/viewer/image/1560841966156/3/LOG_0000/.

56 On this ambiguity, see PESSARRODONA: “Macarrones en tonadillas”, 2019.

57 Its performers – Lorenza Correa, Francisco García, Mariano Querol and José García Ugalde y Alcázar – coincided in the same company at least between the 1794/1795 and 1799/1800 seasons: she was the third *dama de cantado*, Francisco García the seventh *galán de cantado*, Mariano Querol the first *gracioso* and José García the second. See EMILIO COTARELO: *Isidoro Máiquez y el teatro de su tiempo*. Madrid: Imprenta de J. Perales y Martínez, 1902, pp. 532-533 and 538-539.

thus opens with two national stereotypes on display: Lorenza Correa, by then a well-established singer, plays a marchioness fascinated by everything Italian, as opposed to her husband, played by Francisco García, who prefers Spanish things to the point of exclaiming in his seguidillas boleras “Más que todas las arias | y los tercetos | vale de una bolera | un taconeó”. This infuriates his wife so much that it sets off an argument in which she smashes his guitar while he attempts to do likewise with the harpsichord.

The most amusing moment is, however, the appearance of the singing teacher Don Sisenando and his manservant, as described in the stage directions: “Sale [Mariano] Querol de Abate petimetrísimo con grandes tacones, gran roscón y con él Pasqualotto,⁵⁸ ayuda de cámara, también petimetre, que le trae el paragua abierto como si vinieran por la calle. Cuanto dicen y hacen es cargado y ridículo”. The husband and wife were in fact expecting don Sisenando, recently arrived from Italy, as this amusing *parola* shows:⁵⁹

“Don Sisenando ⁶⁰	¿Y por qué en guerra activa estábais?
Marquesa	Ese baúsán...
Marqués	Esa loca...
Los dos	... se ha empeñado...
Marquesa	... en aprender...
Marqués	... y ensayar la música ultramontana...

58 Performed by José García Ugalde y Alcázar, second *gracioso* of Ribera’s company in the late eighteenth century. See the previous note.

59 Spoken text, in the jargon of the genre.

60 In the original manuscript, the characters are indicated with the actors’ names.

Marquesa	... la música de arrabal para obsequiaros.
Marqués	... y haceros ver que aquí saben cantar como en Italia.
Don Sisenando	¡Dislate, locura, barbaridad! Esa es materia improbable. Pasqualotto, ¿no es verdad?
Pasqualotto	Ñor si.
Marqués	¿Qué hombre es ese? ¿Solo sabe «ñor si eccolo qua»?
Marqués	¿Es mudo?
Don Sisenando	No, es de Bolonia.
Marquesa	Pues otros bolonios hay que hablan más que diez cotorras.
Don Sisenando	Son los bolonios de acá.”

Both spouses thus try to show the teacher that the art of singing is as good in Spain as it is in Italy, something deemed impossible by Don Sisenando and his ridiculous manservant, an untalkative Bolognese whose presence provokes mockery of *bolonios*.⁶¹

Having convinced the marquis, in the end all four – Pasqualotto included, as he claims literally “tutti, tutti, tutti, tutti, tutti, tutti sanno solfeggiar” – decide to perform *Le furie d’Oreste*, “composición teatral trágico bufa del bravo don Sisenando”. It consists of a concertante *a catena*, with numbers juxtaposed according to the following structure:

61 *Bolonio* was the student of the Collegio di Spagna in Bologna, as well as a synonym of ignorant. On *bolonios* in tonadillas see PESSARRODONA: “Macarrones en tonadillas”, 2019, pp. 280-282.

1. *Allegro maestoso*, in C time, and C major and A minor;
2. *Andante gracioso*, in 3/4 and F major;
3. *Allegro* and *stretta* “*Más allegro*”, in C time and B flat major;
4. *Allegro assai* in 6/8 and C major – lowered one tone – to end with.

The scene played out in these numbers starts with Orestes’ rage on discovering his mother Clytemnestra’s adulterous relationship with Aegisthus. Although the quartet aspires to be tragic, there is an undercurrent of comic parody. An excellent example is the scene in which Orestes, played by Don Sisenando, and a friend, played by Pasqualotto, stab Aegisthus to death (appendix 4); this can be seen in the vocabulary used at the encounter – “cospettone”, “farfantone”, “poltronaccia” – which is totally out of place in a tragedy and exchanged by the characters in an agile buffo dialogue. It is also visible in the repeated “mori” both Orestes and his friend utter, suggesting an exaggerated rain of stabs, followed by a melody descending towards a Phrygian cadence with a fermata coinciding with the moment of Aegisthus’ death, and in the finale, which sees the two requesting silence, their index fingers on their mouths, while singing a faltering melody. The quartet – and the tonadilla – ends with a *tutti* which makes use of Correa’s vocal talent to finish in a brilliant fashion (Musical example 2).

Passarrodona-example 2

Musical example 2: Fragment of the end of *Los caprichos* by Laserna (only voices and bass).

This is one of the few instances of true virtuosity in this tonadilla, more focused on highlighting the comic elements of the plot. Indeed, the performers were split into two distinct pairs: two good singers – Lorenza Correa and Francisco García – and the two company *graciosos*: Mariano Querol and José

García Ugalde.⁶² This tonadilla therefore shows a case of amateur opera performance in an aristocratic setting, seen through the lens of the humorous tonadilla and its tropes, and, in the case of Francisco García and, above all, Lorenza Correa, through the performances of actors specialised in singing.

However, the tonadilla most relevant to our topic is, without a doubt, *La ópera casera* (1799) by Pablo del Moral.⁶³ This piece features how an amateur company prepares an opera for performance in the capital. This reflects another type of amateur lyric performer, not necessarily from the upper classes but organised into small companies. Indeed, we find accounts of amateur productions in the Madrid press, as in an article published in the *Diario de Madrid* on 20 August 1793, which praises an amateur staging of *El barbero de Sevilla* by Paisiello.⁶⁴

The tonadilla makes use of various tropes to caricature opera productions and their performers, comically exaggerated in an amateur company. As the leading lady says in a telling *parola*: “Más piques que en los actores hay en los aficionados”. This character, played by Vicenta Prado, and another singer, played by Vicente Sánchez Camas – both then specialised in singing roles⁶⁵ – are in charge of the company, she as leading lady and he as tenor, composer and director, as she explains in a *parola*: “soy la dama y en la ópera yo mando”, to which he replies “soy tenor, director y compositor y no hablo una palabra”. After an initial duet sung by them, the conflict becomes apparent: the

62 See note 55.

63 There is a published version for voice and piano: PABLO DEL MORAL: *La ópera casera*, transcription and harmonization by JOSÉ SUBIRÁ. Madrid: Unión Musical Española, 1970.

64 As I commented in my paper “Il ritorno di Figaro in patria”.

65 She was the third *dama de cantado* and he the fifth *galán*, also *de cantado*, in Francisco Ramos’s company. See COTARELO: *Isidoro Máiquez y el teatro de su tiempo*, 1902, p. 536.

buffo who should join them for the following trio is nowhere to be seen, and they deduce that his absence is due to his siding with the second lady, upset because the leading one has limited her to only one aria. After a search, the tenor finds a substitute buffo, who appears with a text in Spanish, followed by this *parola*:

“Ella	¿Qué bajo es este?
Él	En España hay mucha escasez de bajos.
Ella	Cuando usted los necesita, bien sabe usted encontrarlos.
Él	Aquellos son bajos tiples, y estotros son bajos bajos.
Ella	¿No sabe usted alguna aria?
Bufo	Sí, señora, pero el caso es que estoy un poco ronco.
Ella	¡Con ronqueras empezamos!
Él	Que siempre tengan achaques los que huelen a teatro, cojeras los bailarines...
Ella	Ronqueras las que cantamos...
Bufo	Y accidentes las que riñen con el cortejo.
Ella	¡Qué claro habla usted!
Bufo	¿Que no pasa esto entre los aficionados?
Él	Y mucho más. [...]”

This *parola* is interesting not only because of the fun poked at the usual physical complaints of singers and dancers, but also because of its reference to the scarcity of basses in Spain.⁶⁶ Indeed, the Spanish tradition was one of high voices. The fact that the role of buffo in this tonadilla appears in the F-clef, something extremely rare in this repertoire, is highly relevant.⁶⁷ In order to show off his talent, the buffo performs the aria “Lei comandi, signorina», one of the most famous numbers of *Il pittore parigino* by Cimarosa (1781),⁶⁸ there sung by the Barone and here transcribed in its original key⁶⁹ but sung one tone down. After his excellent rendition, he is asked to stay with the company, and the tonadilla ends with the three singing the words “oh, qué grata es la armonía | cuando se unen a porfía | un tenor, un tiple, un bajo | que consiguen modular”, as a final *stretta*, taking turns singing passages of virtuosic agility. *La ópera casera* by Pablo del Moral is thus a depiction of what everyday life in an amateur opera company might have been like, something we still know little about, but into which the

66 Also in Laserna’s *Lección de música y bolero*. See SUÁREZ-PAJARES: *Tonadillas (I)*, 1998, p. xxxvii.

67 Normally all the voices appear in C-clef on the first line, to be sung in the most suitable octave. On musical writing for men in tonadillas see PESSARRODONA: “El cuerpo cantante en las tonadillas a solo para Miguel Garrido”, 2019.

68 Cotarelo mentions the staging of this opera in Barcelona in 1783 (see COTARELO: *Orígenes y establecimiento de la ópera hasta 1800*, 1917, p. 250), but it does not appear in the main authority on this subject: ROGER ALIER: *L’òpera a Barcelona. Orígens, desenvolupament i consolidació de l’òpera com a spectacle teatral a la Barcelona del segle XVIII*. Barcelona: Institut d’Estudis Catalans, 1990.

69 See DOMENICO CIMAROSA: *Il pittore parigino*. Naples, Biblioteca del Conservatorio di Musica San Pietro a Majella, Rari 1.4.3-4; http://ks4.imsalp.net/files/imglnks/usimg/f/fa/IMSLP351385-PMLP567460--Rari_1.4.3-4-_Pittore_parigino_Spartito.pdf.

tonadilla offers us a glimpse through its conventions and its humour.

CONCLUSION

Although there are many more case studies, the examples considered here suggest that opera, as a natural element of the soundscape of the day, inspired the plots of tonadillas, turning them into *spaces* for opera, even when this genre was absent from the theatres. These tonadillas would, therefore, reflect real domestic operatic practice, both in education and in performance, through a stylised lens – with professional singers – or a deforming, parodic one.

Moreover, many of the references to opera are identifiable quotations, from the most popular contemporary repertoire, whether performed in theatres or sold in print. Tonadillas, therefore, could become another vehicle for spreading the operatic repertoire, making it known in contexts different from its original one.

In addition, this research has offered us unprecedented insights into the tonadilla and the world it represents, above all from a social perspective. Through this study, we have seen the upper classes portrayed in tonadillas, with special emphasis on the role of women as music pupils. We have seen that a genre traditionally associated with the lower classes could also reflect the world of the upper echelons of society, be they aristocratic or bourgeois, though by means of caricature and parody.

In summary, tonadillas offer very rich material enabling us to bring everyday life in the eighteenth century closer to us, not only in their plots and characters but also from the perspective of the soundscape of the day, always taking into account the genre's brevity, humour, and musical nature. Thanks to this, we have been able to take a closer look at the impact opera had in eighteenth-century Spain, beyond its mere performance on the stage.

[Appendix 1]

Appendix 1: Transcription of the central minuet of *Los maestros* (1758) by Luis Misón (mm. 57-88).

[Appendix 2]

Appendix 2: Singing lesson from Blas de Laserna's *El maestro de cantar* (1775).

[Appendix 3]

Appendix 3: Beginning of the singing lesson from Pablo del Moral's *El maestro de música* (1790).

[Appendix 4]

Appendix 4: Fragment of *Le furie d'Oreste*, inside Laserna's tonadilla *Los caprichos*.

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