

The National Society of Music (1915–1922) and the Ambivalent Democratization of Music in Spain

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Abstract: The Spanish National Society of Music was founded in 1915 with a double objective: first, to define, once and for all, the musical identity of the country; and second, to create a space where composers and musicians could develop their artistic careers. In this sense, both the society's self-denomination as "national," and its apparent integrating nature suggest a clear attempt to democratize Spanish music. However, the present paper shows that the reality was completely different. Yet, by analyzing the society's internal ideology, by describing its policy for selecting the repertoire of the concerts, and by examining its actual social impact, I demonstrate that the National Society of Music was a non-democratic institution with an elitist understanding of the art. This reality strongly contrasts its typically idealized conception and will allow the reader to understand its disappearance in 1922, after only seven seasons of activity.

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At the beginning of the 1910s, some of the most influential Spanish composers and performers who were developing their artistic careers in the country started to demand an improvement in their work situation. Their primary complaints focused around the little attention that institutions devoted to musical diffusion—especially the Philharmonic Societies—were paying to their music. In such a way, the press and the specialized magazines became a forum for debate on this issue, and the point of no return was the manifesto signed in August of 1911 by the composer Rogelio Villar. Within his writing, not only did he manage to summarize the claims of the moment, but he also proposed, as a solution, the creation of the National Society of Music, as we can read in the following extract from the aforementioned manifesto:

The Spanish composers who cultivate composition for the love of the art, as [a] sort of apostolate, since in Spain, currently, it is not possible to aspire

to make a living from this art, [we] spend our lives regretting, rightly, the shortage of concerts of chamber and symphonic music, the little importance that is given among us to musical art, the lack of a national lyrical theater, the need for a concert hall, [the absence of] intelligent criticism, the little interest for good music and the lack of protection, the almost abandonment and indifference that the government shows for this art, [and] the unpatriotic work of musical societies that, like the Madrilenian Philharmonic, [...] do little or nothing for Spanish music and musicians.

As composers, we would remedy our already chronic ills [...] by constituting a National Society of Music, like the French, or the Italian, dedicated, if not exclusively, with the specialty of promoting the love of our music, organizing concerts of works by Spanish composers, executed by artists and groups of the country. [...] There is no other solution: [...]. Anything other than founding a National Society for the purpose indicated, by means of a sincere union between the composers, will be wasting time and crying out to the moon [...].¹

Therefore, and after four years of fierce discussions between musicians and members of Philharmonic Societies, the final establishment of the National Society of Music in 1915 promised a solution for two longstanding problems plaguing the Spanish musical milieu. Firstly, there was a need to define the country's musical identity, which translated into a strong concern about the development of Spanish music and its integration into the international context. Secondly, the musical canon was dissociated from new music, which had difficulties finding its way into the musical circuit and to the audience. Yet during the Society's years of activity (1915–1922), a strong cultural restoration was going on in Spain in which music was placed, at last,

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- 1 “Los compositores españoles que cultivamos la composición por amor al arte, como [una] especie de apostolado, pues en España, por ahora, no puede aspirarse a vivir de este arte, pasamos la vida lamentándonos, con razón, de la escasez de conciertos de música de cámara y sinfónica, de la poca importancia que se da entre nosotros al arte musical, de la falta de un teatro lírico nacional, de la necesidad de una sala de conciertos, de una crítica inteligente, de la poca afición a la buena música y de la falta de protección, del casi abandono e indiferencia que el estado tiene por este arte, de la labor poco patriótica de las sociedades musicales que, como la filarmónica madrileña, [...] poco o nada hacen por la música y músicos españoles. Los compositores remediaríamos nuestros ya crónicos males [...] constituyendo una Sociedad Nacional de Música, como la francesa, o como la italiana, dedicada, si no exclusivamente, con especialidad a fomentar la afición a nuestra música, organizando conciertos de obras de compositores españoles, ejecutadas por artistas y agrupaciones del país. [...] No hay otra solución: [...] Todo lo que no sea fundar una Sociedad Nacional con el fin indicado por medio de una unión sincera de los compositores será perder el tiempo y clamar a la luna [...]” Rogelio Villar, “Sociedad Nacional de Música,” *Revista musical* [Bilbao], no. 8 (August 1911): 194 (author's translation).

at the height of the other arts in importance and consideration.² Moreover, as I will discuss later on, this issue was part of a larger debate in Spanish politics and society on how to reform the country after the “Disaster of 1898”—a term employed to denominate the loss, in 1898, of the last colonies of Cuba and the Philippines—and how to proceed during the World War I.

Consequently, and following the essential premises of its own constitution, the Society introduced a wide range of old and new repertoire by Spanish composers, as well as pieces created by foreign musicians following the new European musical practices. In this sense, both the Society’s identity as “national” and its apparent integrating nature suggest a clear attempt to democratize Spanish music, giving a space reclaimed by composers and performers, but also opening up the musical circuit to a wider array of audiences through concerts. Indeed, this was the first amendment of its own Book of Regulation:

Art. I. With the name of *Sociedad Nacional de Música* is created one in this Court, which object is, firstly, to promote the musical creation and to procure that the music produced is performed and edited. By the same token, it would also be the object of the Society everything that, in addition to the first objective, means culture and promotion of the music.³

However, and after researching this transcendental institution,⁴ a crucial question arises: Was this attempt at democratization a real priority for the direction of the National Society of Music?

Hence, throughout this paper, I explore and answer this question by studying how the internal ideology of the National Society of Music and its social impact affected its active involvement in disseminating music. First, I analyze the cultural context and the ideological and aesthetic debates generated at the very moment of its foundation. Second, I address one issue related to its operation: the selection of the repertoire. Finally, I examine the typology of its members and the opinions of the critics. In doing so, I show that the National

2 María Nagore, Leticia Sánchez de Andrés, and Elena Torres, eds., *Música y cultura en la Edad de Plata (1915–1939)* (Madrid: Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, 2009).

3 “Art. I. Con el título de *Sociedad Nacional de Música* se constituye una en esta corte una cuyo objeto es, en primer término, el de fomentar la creación musical y procurar que la música producida sea publicada en conciertos y ediciones. Será asimismo objeto de la sociedad todo aquello que, además de este primer objetivo, signifique cultura y fomento de la música.” *Reglamento* [Book of Regulation], Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Legacy of Bartolomé Pérez Casas, signature M-3383 (author’s translation).

4 David Ferreiro Carballo, “La Sociedad Nacional de Música (1915–1922): Historia, Repertorio y Recepción” (Master’s thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2015).

Society of Music was a non-democratic institution with an elitist understanding of the art—a reality that strongly contrasts its typically idealized conception.

The Context and the Origin of the Ideology

The members of the National Society of Music projected inside the institution an aesthetic conflict between two external cultural powers: France and Germany. Musicologist Samuel Llano, in his book *Whose Spain?*,⁵ has explored this issue in depth, putting on the table the influence of France in the configuration of the face of Spanish musical identity, which had been the most visible up until the present. Paraphrasing his own words, the first two decades of the twentieth century show a change in the mentality of French intellectuals who, in their cultural studies of Spain, captured concerns over the military and cultural hegemony of Germany, who had won the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. Consequently, they ended up building an image of Spain that is based on its Latin essence and is described by a very strong anti-Teutonic character, especially within the musical milieu. In this sense, Spain was considered within their writings to be the best cultural allied of France against Germany, and this reality—which will be crucial to understand the operation of the Spanish National Society of Music—is summarized by Samuel Llano as follows:

The early decades of the twentieth century witnessed a significant change in how Spain was situated on the French intellectual horizon. At that moment, Spain ceased to be mostly regarded as an exotic corner of Europe, and was increasingly being used as a discursive site on which to project shared anxieties over the definition of a French identity. Although the popular imaginaries mostly relied on nineteenth-century “exotic” stereotypes of Spain, French intellectuals started to reflect their concerns over Germany’s military power and cultural hegemony in their studies about Spanish culture, literature, music and the arts. This phenomenon stemmed from the fact that, unlike Spain, Germany had represented a military, diplomatic, economic and cultural rival since at least the mid-nineteenth-century.⁶

Hence, before 1914 in France, the French intelligentsia wrote a set of anti-German discourses based on the idea of a union between all nations with a Latin tradition. Once again using Llano’s words, for the French, Spain rapidly assumed the status of a “cultural periphery, or [even] more particularly, a satellite of France.”⁷ Some years later, immediately after the outbreak of World War I in

5 Samuel Llano, *Whose Spain?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

6 Llano, *Whose Spain*, 3.

7 Llano, *Whose Spain*, 12. In addition to Llano’s discussion, the ideological development of French music in the pre-war time was also analyzed by Barbara

1914, the idea of Spain as an appendix of France became more pronounced and was supported by the most celebrated French Hispanists of the time, who continued with the idea of considering the adjacent country as a major cultural ally against Germany. Within the musical sphere, Henri Collet stands out as a leading French intellectual during this period, and Llano summarizes his ideas in the following manner: “[Collet] argues that the Spanish national musical school exists only thanks to the support and encouragement of French musicians, who have instilled a sense of national pride in their Spanish counterparts.”⁸ In addition to that, the Spanish musicians who were studying in France contributed themselves to the consolidation of this artificial stance. A good example of this is the testimony of the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla, who wrote in a letter addressed to the painter Ignacio Zuloaga: “referring to my profession, my homeland is Paris.”⁹

From my discussion above, a reality that was important for the constitution of the National Society of Music emerges: a sizable majority of the Spanish composers from the beginning of the twentieth century had chosen Paris for studying with the masters of the French school. Not only did they learn French musical techniques but also assumed and integrated the anti-German discourses that I have mentioned. Once World War I began in 1914, these musicians returned to Spain with a clear aesthetic point of view and were ready to defend the principles instilled in their minds by French propaganda. If this was not enough, due to the neutrality of Spain during the Great War, French Hispanists could keep in touch with the principal Spanish musicians of the time, which made it possible for them to maintain their influence during the years of activity of the National Society of Music (1915–1922).

However, in those years Madrid was also going through the last peak of the Wagnerism, especially after the first premiere of *Tristan und Isolde* in the Royal

Kelly, *Music and Ultra-Modernism in France. A fragile Consensus, 1913–1939* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013).

8 Llano, *Whose Spain*, 38.

9 “Para cuanto se refiere a mi oficio, mi patria es París.” Letter from Manuel de Falla to the painter Ignacio Zuloaga, dated in Granada on February 12, 1923 (author’s translation). The whereabouts of the original are unknown. There is a copy in Granada (Spain), Fundación y Archivo Manuel de Falla, folder of correspondence 7798. Of course, this quotation is only a direct example to illustrate here Falla’s aesthetic thought. However, this issue has been deeply studied by other scholars, such as Michael Christoforidis, “Aspects in the Creative Process in Manuel de Falla’s *El retablo de Maese Pedro* and *Concerto*” (Ph.D. diss., University of Melbourne, 1997); Carol Hess, *Manuel de Falla and the Modernism in Spain, 1898–1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); and Elena Torres Clemente, *Las operas de Manuel de Falla: de La vida breve a El retable de Maese Pedro* (Madrid: Sociedad Española de Musicología, 2007).

Theater, in 1911,¹⁰ which meant that some composers supported the German musical influence. Of course, this reality reveals a larger debate that comes from the so-called “Disaster of 1918.” Yet, after losing the colonies of Cuba and Filipinas, Spain initiated a process of political and cultural regeneration in order to integrate the country inside Europe. The outbreak of World War I took place in the middle of this process, when nothing was completely defined. In consequence, Spain—which at the moment was not important to the other European nations—faced a military conflict without a clear ideological position, and have to decide among three proposals derived from the war: the parliamentary monarchy of Great Britain, the French Republic, and the authoritative monarchy of Germany.¹¹ The problem was that the political tendencies and the artistic influences of the Spanish intelligentsia did not match: for example, a political supporter of France could also be a cultural supporter of Germany, and vice versa. This is just one reason why the apparent neutrality of Spain was much more complex than the simple fact of not participating in the actual war.¹² This also applies in particular to the musical milieu and, especially, to the National Society of Music. Hence, the ingredients for an internal aesthetic conflict within the institution were on the table.

Indeed, the cultural and social tensions that I have outlined allowed the coexistence of two opposed aesthetic models within the Artistic Committee of the National Society of Music: on the one hand, those who had returned from Paris, represented by Manuel de Falla, brought with them a Francophile agenda influenced by the style of Claude Debussy. Therefore, they built a musical identity based on Spanish popular sources subjugated to the symbolistic modal harmonies of Debussy’s model. On the other hand, there was a group of musicians with Conrado del Campo at the forefront,¹³ which projected prac-

10 To go deeper into the influence of Wagner in Madrid between 1900 and 1914, see Paloma Ortiz de Urbina Sobrino, “La recepción de Richard Wagner en Madrid (1900–1914)” (Ph.D. diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2003).

11 To go deeper into this issue, see Maximiliano Fuentes Codera, *España en la Primera Guerra Mundial. Una movilización cultural* (Madrid: Akal, 2014).

12 The cultural and political tensions generated in Spain during World War I between neutrals, allies, and Germanophiles were studied in depth by Andreu Navarra Ordoño, 1914. *Aliadófilos y germanófilos en la cultura Española* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2014).

13 Conrado del Campo was, together with Manuel de Falla, one of the most important composers of the time, not only because of the inherent quality of his prolific catalogue, but also due to the influence of his aesthetic ideas on his students at the Conservatory of Madrid, where he taught composition from 1915 onwards. For more about this important figure, I recommend two main sources: 1) Ramón García Avello, “Campo Zavaleta, Conrado del,” in *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana* (Madrid: SGAE, 1999–2002), 2:982–93;

tices from the second half of the nineteenth century and combined them with more advanced gestures, textures, and harmonies that were employed by other German composers of the time. Thus, they created an alternative vision of the Spanish musical identity which also made use of material stemming from traditional music, but hybridized them with a German influence combined with the strong Wagnerian heritage that had been developed during the first fifteen years of the twentieth century. Despite the fact that this situation was general within the Spanish musical milieu, it ended up conditioning the operation of the National Society of Music, as I will demonstrate.

The Programmed Repertoire

Of course, this aesthetic confrontation was reflected in the musical programming of the National Society of Music. In this sense, during its seven seasons of activity (1915–1922), the institution organized a total of 82 concerts in which an approximate number of 754 musical pieces were performed, as it is shown on Table 1.

After having carried out a systematic study of the National Society's programming in the aforementioned study,¹⁴ it is possible to state that, in general, the society was quite integrating: despite the internal ideological inclination that I will explain later, they put together, to a greater or lesser extent, a very rich variety of musical styles. In this sense, the concerts included pieces that are modern and canonical; Spanish and foreign; solo, chamber, and orchestral. In addition, performers ranged from musicians known primarily in Spain to artists with international reputations. This was explained by the secretary of the institution, Adolfo Salazar, who wrote in 1919—when the institution had already overcome the middle-point of its activity—an accurate summary of the Society's programming that, as a matter of fact, completely matches with my analysis:

The Society has given 61 concerts, in which 338 Spanish works have been performed, premiering 157 of them. The number of foreign [compositions] is approximately the same: 387, with 171 at the first hearing. Among the authors, most of them current, we can find French, English, Italians, Bohemians, Hungarians and Russians. The works range from the grand orchestra to solo piano, [and] there have been “concert versions” of lyric theater, symphonies, suites, symphonic poems, sextets, quintets, quartets, trios and sonatas for bow and wind instruments; [and] celebrated virtuous

2) David Ferreiro Carballo, Conrado del Campo y la definición de una nueva identidad lírica española: *El final de don Álvaro* (1910–1911) y *La tragedia del beso* (1911–1915) (Ph.D. diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2019).

14 Ferreiro, *La Sociedad*.

		Seasons (years)						
		1915	1915-16	1916-17	1917-18	1918-19	1919-20	1920-21
Concerts	I	7	4	18	14	16	17	12
	II	11	5	3	15	4	10	16
	III	7	4	9	3	12	3*	3
	IV	9	3	10	12	11	4*	10
	V	11	10	5	13	7	2*	4
	VI	19	15	4	4	7	-*	11
	VII	11	11	19	8	9	5	11
	VIII	3	8	8	6	5	19	11
	IX	-	11	4	4	9	6	9
	X	-	21	4	18	20	3	5
	XI	-	4	10	4	17	4	-
	XII	-	16	13	11	13	-	-
	XIII	-	9	11	7	5	-	-
	XIV	-	-	18	-	-	-	-
Total	754	78	121	136	119	135	73*	92

Table 1: Seasons, concerts, and number of pieces programmed by the National Society of Music during its seven years of activity (1915–1922). Author’s elaboration based on the historical sources mentioned below. The Roman numerals in the left column refer to each concert throughout the corresponding season, as is indicated in the top row. The Arabic numerals in the columns, in turn, represent the number of pieces performed in each of these concerts. The data comes from the official concert programs, which I accessed in two important Spanish archives: the Fundación y Archivo Manuel de Falla, located in the city of Granada, and the Biblioteca de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, located in Madrid. Notwithstanding, notice that the Arabic numbers marked with an asterisk in the sixth season (1919–20) are approximative and based on historical newspapers, since it was not possible to locate the actual programs of concerts III, IV, V, and VI.

and emerging artists have paraded for their stage (the sessions were held in the concert hall of the Ritz hotel).¹⁵

However, if we focus our attention on the names of the composers that were programmed on the concerts of the society, we see its actual aesthetic tendency. First of all, let us take a look at the general top ten:

Name	Pieces programmed
Claude Debussy	61
Enrique Granados	32
Isaac Albéniz	25
Frederick Chopin	23
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	17
César Franck	17
Gabriel Fauré	17
Rogelio Villar	17
Manuel de Falla	16
Maurice Ravel	16

Table 2: The ten most programmed composers of the National Society of Music during its seven seasons (1915–1922). Author’s elaboration based on the historical sources mentioned above.

As it is possible to see in Table 2, Claude Debussy is first in the ranking (8.1%), with more than twice the number of pieces as the next composer. Debussy is followed by Enrique Granados (4.4 %) in second place and Isaac Albéniz (3.3%) in third—two composers who are considered to be aesthetic precursors of Manuel Falla and are also very close to the Francophile style, especially Isaac Albéniz¹⁶.

15 “La Sociedad lleva dados 61 conciertos, en los que ha interpretado 338 obras españolas, estrenando 157 de ellas. El número de extranjeras es aproximadamente igual: 387, con 171 en primera audición. Entre los autores, en su mayoría actuales, figuran franceses, ingleses, italianos, bohemios, húngaros y rusos. Las obras van desde la gran orquesta al piano solo, ha habido “versiones de concierto” de obras teatrales, sinfonías, suites, poemas sinfónicos, sextetos, quintetos, cuartetos, tríos y sonatas para instrumentos de arco y viento; han desfilado por su sala (las sesiones se celebraban en la sala de conciertos del hotel Ritz) virtuosos célebres y artistas incipientes.” Adolfo Salazar, “El año musical, balance de la temporada,” *La lectura* [Madrid], no. 5 (May 1919): 341 (author’s translation).

16 For more information about the Francophile style of Isaac Albéniz, see Walter Aaron Clark, *Isaac Albéniz. Portrait of a Romantic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Next, two canonical musicians show up, F. Chopin (3.1%) and W.A. Mozart (2.3%), who, more than representing their own nations, are symbols of a musical past with a different set of aesthetic implications. Following this pair are Cesar Franck (2.3%) and Gabriel Fauré (2.3%), two of the most important masters of the French school prior to Debussy. They are followed by Manuel de Falla (2.2%) and, somewhat unexpectedly, Rogelio Villar (1875–1937)—a Spanish composer linked to the German tradition (2.3%)¹⁷. The reason for Villar’s appearance might lie in the fact that, as I showed at the beginning of this chapter, he was the first promoter of the institution and had a close connection with Falla and the secretary Adolfo Salazar, especially with the latter, with whom he was in charge of the *Revista musical hispano-americana*. Finally, this top ten list is closed by another leading figure of the French milieu, Maurice Ravel (2.2%). Hence, as we can see, there is a prominent and evident relationship with French music.

However, we can go even further, since shifting the attention to the ten most programmed Spanish composers results in a more or less similar outcome, as demonstrated in Table 3.

Name	Pieces programmed
Enrique Granados	32
Isaac Albéniz	25
Rogelio Villar	17
Manuel de Falla	16
Antonio Soler	16
Joaquín Turina	13
Juan Manén	9
Joaquín Larregla	8
Óscar Esplá	8
Conrado del Campo	7

Table 3: The ten most programmed Spanish composers of the National Society of Music during its seven seasons (1915–1922). Author’s elaboration based on the aforementioned historical sources mentioned above.

The first four, as is evident, are the same Spaniards included in the previous table (Table 2). They are followed by Antonio Soler (2.2%), representative of a

17 For more about this important critic and Spanish composer, see: Enrique Franco, “Villar, Rogelio del,” in *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana* (Madrid: SGAE, 1999–2002), 10:934–38.

musical past that was highly admired by Falla during his neoclassical period.¹⁸ Moreover, Joaquín Turina (1.7%) and Óscar Esplá (1.1%) are both, once again, related to the Francophile style.¹⁹ Rogelio Villar (2.3%) and Conrado del Campo (1%) also sneak into the list, the latter being a member of the Artistic Committee and, therefore, possessing a certain (but not too much) influence on the programming. Hence, the principal conclusion is evident: at least on an internal level, the aesthetic battle between the musical supporters of the Francophiles and the Germanophiles was clearly won by the French, since they had a stronger presence in the concerts programmed by the institution between 1915 and 1922. As it could not be any other way, this triumph was translated into a positive valuation of the Francophile group and into an ulterior and exclusive historiographic treatment of them, since Spanish musicology has ignored the German-influenced side of our musical identity. Fortunately, this mistake is already being rectified by Spanish musicology.

18 Antonio Soler (1729–1783) was the chapel master of the monastery of San Lorenzo del Escorial, a city very close to Madrid, and one of the leading figures of Spanish music in the eighteenth century. For more about this important composer, see Paulino Cepedón, “Soler y Ramos, Antoni,” in *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana* (Madrid: SGAE, 1999–2002), 9:1122–31.

19 Joaquín Turina (1882–1949) was, together with Manuel de Falla and Conrado del Campo, one of the most important and influential Spanish composers during the first half of the twentieth century. For more about this composer, I recommend two important sources: 1) Mariano Pérez Gutiérrez, “Turina Pérez, Joaquín,” in *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana* (Madrid: SGAE, 1999–2002), 10:513–25; and 2) Tatiana Aráez Santiago, “La etapa parisina de Joaquín Turina (1905–1913): construcción de un lenguaje nacional a partir de los diálogos entre Francia y España” (Ph.D. diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2019). Óscar Esplá (1886–1976) was a Spanish composer very close, personally and stylistically, to Manuel de Falla and the Francophile aesthetic side. For more, see Enrique Franco, “Esplá Triay, Oscar,” in *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana* (Madrid: SGAE, 1999–2002), 4:786–94.

Juan Manén (1883–1971) was a Catalan violinist, conductor, and composer influenced by the style of Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss. For more, see Francesc Cortès i Mir, “Manén i Planas, Juan,” in *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana* (Madrid: SGAE, 1999–2002), 7:91–93. Joaquín Larregla (1865–1945) was a composer born in the north of Spain (Navarra) who implemented in his oeuvre the folkloric traditional materials of his region. For more, see Antonio Iglesias, “Larregla Urbietta, Joaquín,” in *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana* (Madrid: SGAE, 1999–2002), 6:766–67.

Typology of the Members: Propaganda, Exclusivity, and Social Impact

Not only was this victory the product of a friendly cultural exchange within the Francophile group, but it was also supported internally by the two main leaders of the society—president Miguel Salvador²⁰ and, especially, secretary Adolfo Salazar, who was also a composer, but, above all, a very influential and vehement musical critic. In this sense, I have to highlight the role of Salazar as the principal source of musical propaganda that was crucial in tipping the aesthetic scales toward the French side. As musicologist Elena Torres puts it, when Adolfo Salazar met Manuel de Falla in person, he became one of the biggest supporters of the Andalusian composer, announcing him as “the savior of Spanish music.”²¹ This attitude was fully integrated into his duties as a secretary, and, as Mexican musicologist Consuelo Carredano states in her dissertation about Salazar, it was within the National Society of Music where he first proved his capacity for musical influence.²²

One of Salazar’s most notable efforts can be seen in the program notes he wrote for each concert, which can be considered as authentic propaganda in favor of the Francophile side. For the concert on November 29, 1916,²³ the National Society had programmed together the orchestral version of Manuel

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- 20 The importance of Miguel Salvador in understanding the development of Spanish music during the first third of the twentieth century is crucial. In addition to his musical activity as an amateur pianist and composer, he was also a very influential politician and cultural manager, as director of the National Society of Music (1915–1922), founder of the Orquesta Filarmónica de Madrid (1915), and finally, during the second republic (1931–1939), executive member of the Junta Nacional de Música, an institution which belonged to the Spanish Government. For more on this figure, see Emilio Casares Rodicio, “Salvador Carreras, Miguel,” in *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana* (Madrid: SGAE, 1999–2002), 9:627.
- 21 Elena Torres Clemente, “La imagen de Manuel de Falla en la crítica de Adolfo Salazar,” in *Música y cultura en la Edad de Plata (1915–1939)*, ed. María Nagore, Leticia Sánchez de Andrés, and Elena Torres Clemente (Madrid: ICCMU, 2009), 265–85.
- 22 Consuelo Carredano, “Adolfo Salazar: pensamiento estético y acción cultural (1914–1937)” (Ph.D. diss., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2006). In addition to these last two sources, I also recommend the most recent book on Adolfo Salazar: Francisco Parralejo Masa, *El músico como intelectual. Adolfo Salazar y la creación del discurso de la vanguardia musical española (1914–1936)* (Madrid: Sociedad Española de Musicología, 2019).
- 23 Program notes for the concert celebrated on November 29, 1916. Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, collection “Bartolomé Pérez Casas,” reference M-3383.

de Falla's *El amor brujo* and Manuel Manrique de Lara's Symphony in D minor, representative examples of the two aesthetic models: Francophile and Germanophile, respectively. In his program notes for the concert, Salazar introduces the first composition as a musical piece in which Falla "adopts an extremely new technique and a way of expression, to whose first advances alone are we just started to get accustomed."²⁴ Contrastingly, he describes Manrique de Lara's symphony as "a spiritual decadence or regression to a less refined state of sensibility than that of Wagner."²⁵ Thus, as we can see, the secretary of an institution that is supposed to be democratic and impartial with the Spanish repertoire it programs is defending his own aesthetic stand.

Hence, it is very evident that Salazar's program notes represent a slanted and highly tendentious set of documents which—due to their widespread public nature and availability—turned the National Society of Music into one of the most active driving forces of musical propaganda of the time. In addition, I must underline the consequences of such propaganda. Despite the fact that the works of both Falla and Manrique de Lara are considered to be of high quality today, the two composers did not secure the same status in history: Falla has always received more favor in historiographical discourses. This unequal treatment—and, of course, the situation of Manrique de Lara can be extrapolated to the rest of the composers with the same aesthetic profile—is a result of the strong impact of the general media spider web that reached into different places, including the National Society of Music.²⁶

In this sense, all the matters treated to this point reflect an evident attempt by the majority sector of the National Society of Music to impose their ideals and to have influence over the musical taste of the audience, a fact that reveals a non-democratic agenda. Indeed, there is no doubt that not only were the propagandistic discourses generated in France against Germany assumed by a large majority of Spanish musicians, but they were also the catalyst for the exclusive historical prevalence of the Francophile model of musical identity that stems from themselves. Notwithstanding, the historical testimonies prove that, actually, the capacity of the National Society to change the aesthetic

24 "Adopta una técnica y modo de expresión novísimos, a cuyos solos primeros avances empezamos a acostumbrarnos." (Author's translation).

25 "una decadencia espiritual, o una regresión a un estado de sensibilidad menos refinado que el de Wagner." (Author's translation).

26 The importance of Manuel Manrique de Lara has recently been reevaluated by Spanish musicology by means of a book that won the National Award of Musicology in 2014: Diana Díaz González, *Manuel Manrique de Lara (1863–1929). Militar, crítico y compositor polifacético en la España de la Restauración* (Madrid: Sociedad Española de Musicología, 2015).

inclinations of the immediate audience was quite limited and remains reduced to its internal French-related circle.

First of all, the Society focused its attention on a very limited social spectrum. On the one hand, in order to be a member of the institution, it was necessary to reside in Madrid, as one can read on its Book of Regulation.²⁷ This fact alone shows an evident contradiction with the adjective “national” included within its own name. On the other hand, within their lists of members, it is possible to find three different social groups, all of which belong to the Madrilenian upper class: 1) the most prominent musicians, 2) the most prestigious intellectuals, and 3) the aristocracy and the highest social classes of the city. This element, which the press used to refer to as “a very distinguished audience” or “the most important of the Madrilenian milieu,” reveals the image of a very exclusive institution that did not welcome ordinary people. Finally, once again regarding the repertoire, it is very significant that the National Society always refused to include in its concerts the *zarzuela*, a kind of musical spectacle that was appreciated by all social classes. All of these elements together confirm that the institution, its programming, and membership cannot be considered as democratic: the National Society of Music ignored the most popular genre of the time (*zarzuela*); marginalized German-influenced composers; and, finally, excluded not only the popular audiences of Madrid, but also those from the rest of the country.

Second of all, the main foundational principles of the institution were not ignored but understood in a very particular way in order to favor the propagandistic interests that I have outlined. This issue can be observed through the historical press: its study reflects the social impact of the institution as well as the consequences of its decisions. Initially, and no matter the ideological inclination of each newspaper, the National Society of Music was welcomed with a great deal of enthusiasm. A good example of this is the following newspaper clipping from *La Correspondencia de España*, published on February 6, 1915:

It is undeniable that we are walking with firm steps toward the revival of the Spanish music. This fact is clearly proved by the recent success of Spanish composers, such as Turina, Falla, Pérez Casas, Guridi, Conrado del Campo, Vives, Casals, Villar, Usandizaga, Viñes, Óscar Esplá and many other youths that with their talent and enthusiasm are strengthening this flattering hope. [...] Another piece to underline what we are saying is the foundation of the National Society of Music, whose main objective is—according to its Book of

27 Book of Regulation, conserved in Madrid, Biblioteca de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, collection “Bartolomé Pérez Casas,” reference M-3383.

Regulation—to promote the musical creation and to ensure that the music thus produced would be published in concerts and editions.²⁸

In this excerpt, we must focus our attention on a special element: the insistence on linking the National Society with the resurrection of the Spanish music, which allows us to situate the institution within the Spanish cultural regeneration—already introduced at the beginning of this chapter—during the first three decades of the twentieth century. Notably, evidence of the aesthetic confrontation are not yet present in this review, since the writer names both groups of musicians: Francophiles, with Falla and Turina, and Germanophiles, with Del Campo and Villar, among many others.

Over the years, the ideological inclination of the National Society became more evident, and, consequently, the first critical voices against the institution appeared. One of the most representative instances was Rogelio Villar who, as we can read in the following excerpt from a musical magazine, did not hesitate in pointing out the lack of space for Spanish composers within the National Society of Music:

Another thing that I really hate in some of my friends of the National [Society] is what I designate as an excessive effusiveness for the so-called new music [...] and for some of its performers, which is highly detrimental for our production. They do not realize the damage they make [...] and the confusion they cause in the audience, which can be one of the reasons why they lose all appreciation of our music, being imposed as a kind of art that they are not able to understand.²⁹

28 “Es indudable que se camina con firme paso hacia el resurgir de la música española. Con toda claridad lo dicen los recientes triunfos de compositores españoles, como Turina, Falla, Pérez Casas, Guridi, Conrado del Campo, Vives, Casals, Villar, Usandizaga, Viñes, Óscar Esplá y otros muchos jóvenes que con su talento y entusiasmo van robusteciendo esa esperanza halagadora. [...]. Otra pieza de convicción de cuanto decimos es la creación de la Sociedad Nacional de Música, cuyo objeto es en primer término –según dice su Reglamento– el de fomentar la creación musical y procurar que la música producida sea publicada en conciertos y ediciones.” “Sociedad Nacional de Música,” *La Correspondencia de España*, Madrid, February 6, 1915: 5 (author’s translation).

29 “Otra cosa que deploro de veras en algunos de mis amigos de la Nacional es lo que yo califico de excesiva efusión por la música llamada nueva [...] y por alguno de sus intérpretes, que tanto perjudica a nuestra producción. No se dan cuenta del daño que hacen [...] y de la desorientación que producen en el público, que puede ser causa de que pierda la poca afición que tiene por nuestra música, imponiéndole un arte que no suele ser capaz de comprender.” Rogelio Villar, “A mis amigos de la Sociedad Nacional,” *Revista musical hispano-americana* [Madrid], no. 12 (1916): 5–6 (author’s translation).

However, this fact must be situated in context: what Villar is really exposing is that the musicians who do not support the Francophile side are being intentionally ignored by the National Society of Music, as we already know. In addition, the other main problem of the institution comes into light: its favoring of radical tendencies and excessive usage of musical vanguards, which will become the central aesthetic issue during the next decade.

All of these problems—the excessive praise of vanguards, the personal influences, and the unilateral propaganda—were summarized in the memoirs of Carlos Bosch, who was the first Secretary of the National Society of Music and who ended up succumbing to the power of Adolfo Salazar, as can read in the following extract:

One of the causes that spoil our “National [Society]” was the abuse, in all of the concerts, of these *avant-garde novelties*, which were rejected by a big majority of the members. The decisions about the music to be performed were made without careful consideration: they mixed some very thoughtful pieces with other new monstrosities and, as it usually happens in such cases, *personal influences* were imposed with a damaging and very *destructive bias*.³⁰

These codes of conduct caused an institutional crisis that signified the gradual decline of the institution. In consequence, little by little, the National Society of Music lost the favor of its members who did not identify with the musical selections, and also the support of the Germanophile side of the Artistic Committee. On the other side, and despite Salazar’s efforts to protect the institution, the press during the last years notably reduced their coverage to mere descriptions of the concerts without relevant content, diverting the attention away from an institution that had already lost its social impact.³¹

30 “Una de las causas que malograron nuestra ‘Nacional’ fue esa exageración de novedades vanguardistas que se ejecutaban en todos los conciertos, a lo que se resistían la mayor parte de los asociados. Eso se hacía, además, sin verdadera escrupulosidad [sic] escrupulosa: se mezclaban obras de enjundia creadora con meros engendros de nuevo cuño y, según ocurre en tales casos, se imponían influencias personales y se agudizó un partidismo nocivo, de gérmenes destructivos.” Carlos Bosch Herrero, *Mnème. Anales de música y sensibilidad* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1942), 82 (author’s translation); emphasis mine.

31 A comprehensive analysis of the presence of the National Society of Music in the historical press was conducted in Ferreiro, *La Sociedad*.

Conclusions

Having arrived to this point, the main conclusion is evident: not only was the National Society of Music an institution with the aim of musical diffusion, but also it was involved in the cultural and aesthetic debates of the time and, especially, in the process of cultural regeneration through which the country was living. The analysis of its musical programming can be understood as an immediate indicator of this issue, considering that it has revealed an aesthetic inclination toward the Francophile model. In this sense, although at the beginning they tried a confluence of musical tendencies, over the time it became completely sectarian. As I have demonstrated, the main agent in charge of making this mechanism works was Salazar, who used his own program notes as a means of propaganda. This was done with a triple objective: first, to defend the Francophile model and the figure of Manuel de Falla; second, to stop the development of German-influenced music in Spain after World War I; and third, to guide and influence the audience's musical interests.

However, and despite Salazar's efforts, the outcome was not as expected. This was due to three reasons: first, because the institution limited its own impact to a very small and exclusive sector of the society; second, because the real tastes of their audience were ignored by means of the repudiation of the most popular Spanish lyric theatre, the *zarzuela*; and finally, because the National Society, eventually, alienated its own members, who no matter how exclusive they were, did not support the programming of a certain musical aesthetic or the excessive predomination of the vanguards, which, paradoxically, entered Spain thanks to this institution. Hence, the conclusion becomes evident: even though the National Society of Music was created in order to integrate every aspect of Spanish music, its development reveals a non-democratic tendency with the aim of stopping the influence of German culture (a consequence of World War I) and consolidating a Spanish musical identity related to the French aesthetic.

This last aspect leads us to an interesting conclusion directly related to the cultural consequences of World War I in Spain: a large part of the institution's members, mostly the aristocracy, came to the National Society from the Wagnerian Association of Madrid, which had disappeared in 1914. Their entry into the National Society of Music can be perfectly understood as an attempt to dissociate themselves from the German side during the years of conflict, but not because they truly liked the new Francophile aesthetic and the vanguardism imposed by the National Society. A good proof of this consists in the fact that this group started leaving the institution once the war was over.

To conclude, all of these issues confirm that the institution did not have its hypothetical and presupposed democratic effects. Its capacity for the musical

indoctrination of the society was reduced to its internal circle and to a limited and exclusive number of members who remained until the end. Nevertheless, we also have to recognize their undeniable merits related to musical diffusion, since it was thanks to its activity that the vanguards could enter Spain and become the inspiration for the composers of the next period—the so-called “Generation of ’27.” In this sense, the aftermath of the Society’s activities would be positive because, despite the elitism and the sectarianism, and putting away the aesthetic debates, the musical diffusion was transcendental for the cultural and musical regeneration that took place in Spain during the first third of the twentieth century.

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