

Spanish Operetta in Madrid in the Early Twentieth Century

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Abstract

In the early twentieth century Madrid had a rich cultural life and a wide range of theater productions. The most celebrated composers of operettas as Ruperto Chapí, Manuel Fernández Caballero, Gerónimo Giménez and Tomás Bretón were in the maturity of their meteoric careers. At the same time, a new generation burst hard in the Madrid scene. Authors like José Serrano and Vicente Lleó had to deal with the names of the great masters in the proscenium theater. In this paper we study the development of the capital city of Spain and the consequences that their cultural and economic momentum generated in stage music, in addition to the approach to some of the most eminent figures of our lyric theater.

1. The Historical and Social Context in Madrid

At the dawn of the twentieth century Madrid was a metropolis that was undergoing a dramatic and awesome transformation to a social, demographic and financial level. While in 1820 the population was just over 200,000 souls, between 1850 and 1900 the city doubled this amount, exceeding during the last decade of the nineteenth century the half million inhabitants. Just thirty years later, in 1920, the capital city of Spain had more than a million people: The growth of population was also influenced by the increase in migratory movements that took place in Madrid since the second half of the nineteenth century. Of over half a million people that made up the entire population of Madrid in the year 1900, 270,000 people living in the city were born in a different province. The Restoration was a period of huge population growth in Madrid. Thus, from 1877 to 1930, the population of the capital of Spain went from 397,816 to 952,832 inhabitants. Madrid was in the early twentieth century a city marked by its shortcomings with a congested urban center, health problems, a periphery that grew out of control and a lack of internal roads with a poor communication between them.² The new population census led to the need to reshape and modernize the city, especially the city center, with large stately avenues such as La Gran Vía. This new avenue came to replace the network of streets in the heart of Madrid in which humble families, retired, pensioners and great numbers of unemployed people were crowded. Earlier in 1860 the project for the expansion of the city had been approved and its implementation had destroyed the fence erected in 1625 on the orders of Philip IV.³ As for industry, it is necessary to mention the relevance of electricity purchased in the last decade of the nineteenth century with the creation of public lighting and then with the electrification of the tram. The development of electric power was held by foreign companies as Madrid did not own a thriving industrial base at the time.⁴ Madrid, meanwhile, had developed at the half of the nineteenth century the necessary economic functions that allowed it to be considered as the center of the Spanish wealth.

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² RAMOS, C.: *Construyendo la modernidad: Escritura y arquitectura en el Madrid moderno (1918-1937)*, Ediciones Universitat de Lleida, 2010, p. 183.

³ FAJARDO ESTRADA, R.: *Yo seré la tentación. María de los Ángeles Santana*, Editorial Plaza Mayor, 2004, p. 306.

⁴ AUBANELL JUBANY, A.: "La competencia en la distribución de electricidad en Madrid, 1890-1913", en *Revista de Historia Industrial*, nº 2, 1992, pp. 143-171.

Those businessmen of the thirties whose economic background dated back to the second half of the eighteenth century in such companies as the Five Major Guilds, enjoyed a half century economic splendor that had no comparison to any of that displayed by their counterparts in the whole peninsula.⁵ The capital of Spain was a backward city, lacked an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, the main engine of modernism, and was inhabited largely by officials, clergy, aristocratic bourgeois, nobles and a middle class not very well settled.⁶ Madrid, in short, had no industrial proletariat as the Catalan capital but its condition made it a key rallying point for day laborers.⁷ As Madrid became the main economic and financial hub of the country, it is not surprising that many of the landmarks in the capital were risen in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. For example, el Palacio de Cristal in the Retiro was built by Ricardo Velázquez Bosco in 1887 as a greenhouse for an exhibition of plants and flowers from the Philippines. That same year the Palace of Industry and Arts was built. The Bank of Spain was completed in 1891 and for that the church of San Fermín had to be torn down. The Metropolis building-at that time the gas company headquarters expenses-, was one of the first buildings that were risen in the Gran Vía. Moreover, the Post and Communications Palace and the Ministry of the Navy (currently the Army headquarters) were built. In Tivoli Gardens and Circus Hippodrome the Ritz hotel was also risen, inaugurated by King Alfonso XIII himself on October 2, 1910.⁸ In 1922 la Casa del Libro was built, located in La Gran Vía and a symbol of modernity in the Spain of the twenties. Its opening was a success and soon became one of the most innovative libraries in Europe: the reader could directly access the book without needing the help of the clerk or assistant.⁹ In short, the new Madrid grew to be a healthy city, bordered by pleasant wooded avenues and connected to the Manzanares river.¹⁰ However, the large-scale transformation of the city came with the beginning of construction of La Gran Vía in 1910.¹¹ La Gran Vía would therefore become the first, probably the most important contemporary urban action to date in the town and court.¹² All around it countless office buildings of Spanish and foreign companies, cafes, cinemas, department stores, new spaces of sociability and leisure were built, etc.¹³ Streets and blocks disappeared being replaced by a group of buildings in Neo-Renaissance, neo-baroque, French or modernist styles.¹⁴

However, despite the apprehensions, this avenue would become the icon of modernity of the city that aspired to become a capital up to its European counterparts: "La Gran Vía is a privileged balcony to see Madrid move from Court to Metropolis. Very influential in the transition between the city of the nineteenth century and the new metropolis, La Gran Vía symbolizes and condenses in its construction the complex reality of Madrid and Spanish architecture yet for fifty years: the architecture of the nineteenth century in Madrid."¹⁵ In addition to La Gran Vía, the University City and the Metropolitan are the three urban initiatives that will characterize the reign of Alfonso XIII. The second one was the most important cultural enterprise of this monarch, who imported the model of the campus of the American University to do something similar in Madrid.¹⁶ In 1912, after the loss of the colonies and having overcome the isolation that Spain had suffered, people began to realize the importance of the tourism to the national economy. From 1910 Madrid would become a reflection of the national situation within the hospitality industry.

⁵ MARTÍNEZ MARTÍN, J.A.: *Lectura y lectores en el Madrid del siglo XIX*, C.S.I.C., Madrid, 1992, p. 126.

⁶ DA ROCHA ARANDA, O Y MUÑOZ FAJARDO, R.: *Madrid modernista: guía de arquitectura*, Editorial Tébar, Madrid, 2007, p. 13.

⁷ URQUIJO Y GOITIA, J. R.: *La revolución de 1854 en Madrid*, C.S.I.C, Madrid, 1984, p. 13.

⁸ MONTOLIU, P.: *Madrid, Villa y Corte*, Sílex Ediciones, Madrid, 2002, p. 16.

⁹ SERRANO, C Y SALAÚN, S.: *Los felices años veinte, España, crisis y modernidad*, Ediciones de Historia, S.A., 2006, p. 58.

¹⁰ LA FUENTE, A Y MOSCOSO, J.: *Madrid, Ciencia y Corte*, C.S.I.C., Madrid, 1999, p. 25.

¹¹ The capital of Spain had at the time half a million inhabitants. Other cities as London had more than seven million inhabitants and Paris had more than three million. Nevertheless, between 1900 and 1930 the city would double its population reaching the figure of one million inhabitants. Thus, in Spain the population clearly increased from 18.607.000 inhabitants in 1900 to 24.579.000 in 1930.

¹² DEL CORRAL, J.: *La Gran Vía: Historia de una calle*, Sílex Ediciones, 2002, p. 18.

¹³ RUIZ PALOMEQUE, M.: "El trazado de la Gran Vía como transformación de un paisaje urbano", en *Anales del Instituto de Estudios Madrileños*, Madrid, Tomo XIV, 1977, pp. 347-358.

¹⁴ MONTOLIU, P.: *Madrid, Villa y Corte*, Op.Cit., p. 73.

¹⁵ NAVASCUES PALACIO, P Y ALONSO PEREIRA, J.R.: *La Gran Vía de Madrid*, Ediciones Encuentro S.A., Madrid, 2002, p.38.

¹⁶ LÓPEZ GÓMEZ, A.: *Madrid desde la Academia*, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid, 2001, p. 311.

The development of tourism will result in the construction of new facilities, most notably the aforementioned Ritz hotel and the Palace, both built with foreign capital and which up to these days still remain as two of the best hotels in Spain.¹⁷

2. The Theatrical Life in Madrid in the New Century

The social diversification and economic dynamism that characterized the early years of the twentieth century allowed the consolidation of a bourgeois class eager to occupy their leisure time, going to the arenas that had so proliferated in Spain, especially after 1860 when theater becomes a mass product, an industry, a daily consumer object to suit with market laws. The theater by the hour replaced blockbusters of yesterday and the multiplication of functions allowed almost proportionally the division of the price of tickets and assumed, therefore, the diversification of the public. The new performing requirements increased demand provoking more than ever that a huge amount of work and plays were to be performed. Not everything had, of course, the same success, but the vitality of the new model contributed to the renovation of the old molds.¹⁸ Spanish operetta, farce, varieties or magazines, to name a few, show the plurality of forms as well as the generic dynamism that happened in Madrid and in the Spanish scene in illo tempore.¹⁹ The woman, until then limited to fulfill the role to which nature had intended for her within the domestic-level, begins to play a more important role in the theatrical world. The modernization of the country led to an expansion of production and cultural consumption facilitated diffusion, mainly between the 1910 and 1920 decades, a new model of female identity among the urban middle and upper classes, resulting in a large group of intellectual women who played an important role in the social, political and cultural developments of the time. Nowhere was the presence of the "feminine element" more evident than in the cultural events, especially theater.²⁰ The boxes of the main theaters became large windows where the bourgeois ladies could display their costumes, jewelry and other belongings, which became the main auditorium ornaments.

It is interesting to recollect the newspaper articles of the Valencian composer Vicente Peydró published in *El Mercantil Valenciano*, where the author stresses the importance of women attending theaters: "Perhaps in keeping with the importance that women acquire during the Second Spanish Republic, and knowing that females attract males to their gravitational field, Peydró argues that it is necessary to first educate women and to take them back to the lyric genre so they can act as an attraction to men."²¹ Besides the ladies, interest was also initiated by taking the kids to the theater, carrying out children's theater campaigns from the 1921-1922 season. Thus, that same year, the *Eslava* theater opened its doors to younger audiences at Christmas.²² All these changes came to enrich the Spanish scenic panorama with the proliferation of new rooms, new audiences and new artistic forms. Among the main arenas in Madrid one of the most prominent theaters was *El Teatro Real* inaugurated on November 19, 1850. Just six years later, on October 10, 1856, *El Teatro de la Zarzuela* in Jovellanos street made its debut, again one of the most prominent theaters in Spanish operetta. Other theaters deserving special mention both by the number of lyrical representations as well as for their quality were the *Eslava* theater, *Princesa*, *Circo Price Theatre* (which later became the *Parish Theatre*), the *Apolo*, *La Comedia*, the *Lírico* and the *Moderno*.²³ On a different scale such others like *Novedades*, *Recreo Salamanca*, *Comedia*, *Jardines del Buen Retiro* and *Barbieri* could subsequently be found.

¹⁷ GUTIÉRREZ RONCO, S.: *La función hotelera de Madrid*, C.S.I.C., Madrid, 1984, p. 85.

¹⁸ SALGUES, M.: *Teatro patriótico y nacionalismo en España: 1859-1900*, Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2010, p. 20.

¹⁹ VILCHES, F Y DOUGHERTY, B.: *La escena madrileña entre 1926 y 1931*, Editorial Fundamentos, Madrid, 1997, p. 16.

²⁰ KIRKPATRICK, S.: *Mujer, modernismo y vanguardia en España (1898-1931)*, Ediciones Cátedra, Madrid, 2003, p. 9.

²¹ BLASCO MAGRANER, J.S.: *Radiografía del teatro musical*, Cuadernos de Bellas Artes (CABA), Universidad de La Laguna, La Laguna, 2013, p. 27.

²² DOUGHERTY, D Y FRANCISCA VILCHES, M.: *La escena madrileña entre 1918 y 1926*. Editorial Fundamentos, Madrid, 1990, pp. 49-50.

²³ The *Eslava* theater opened on September 30, 1871. The *Apolo* theater opened two years later on March 23, 1873. *Circo Price* theater opened on December 5, 1880 and the *Princesa* opened on October 15, 1885. *El Lírico* theater was one of the latest as its opening didn't occur until 1902.

Madrid also had a large number of rooms in which film sessions were projected such as the Coliseo Imperial,²⁴ the French-Spanish Cinematographer, the Hall Videograph Méjico or the Bióscopo Moderno. Recreation and Salamanca Variety Halls also offered film sessions interspersed in their usual dancing and Spanish couplets. In this kind of places, - that had proliferated in major Spanish cities at the beginning of the century-, it was common to include *varietés* in the different sessions to complete the programme. Light music singers, dancers, magicians and artists offering endless entertainment to the audience. It is at that time when the first ventriloquists like Julio Salcedo Marín, artistically known as Juliano appear, acting since 1904 in different cinemas in the Spanish capital as the French-Spanish, the Atocha or the Recreo-Salamanca.²⁵ It is worth remembering that the first silent films were usually quite short and needed to share their intervals with other shows to complete the programming of the cinema halls. In Spain the phenomenon of the definitive establishment of the cinema and the consequent increase in demand occurred and had evidently a clear starting point in 1905, as in most of the countries around us.²⁶ Thereafter we find that the exhibition had established itself as a stable activity, autonomous, with its own facilities. At peak times for small forms such as the one act operetta not just the Apolo theater but also El Teatro de la Zarzuela, the Eslava, the Martín and La Comedia made different screenings. The emergence of the cinema and its rapid increase, and the predilection that the public showed for it, made many people think of the decline of the theater by the hour. The costs of film sessions were much cheaper than the theater, so movie tickets were also much more affordable: "The cause of the rapid rise of the cinema and the equally rapid decline of the theater by the hour must not be sought in the nature of the show; it is much more at the surface, as it only obeys the price difference. (...)"

For the same amount of money a family can attend ten or twelve cinema shows and just one theatrical performance; that is, they can entertain themselves six or eight days. And that's the secret."²⁷ The proliferation of cinema halls was increasing day by day because entrepreneurs understood that as the one act operetta had supplanted the three acts operetta and a form with much less artistic quality had done the same with the one act operetta soon the cinematographer would rule over the ashes of the theater by the hour, which from the beginning seemed threatened to death. By 1915 a movie ticket cost between thirty-five and forty cents for a priority seat and fifteen cents for a general seat. In 1914 the salary of a qualified worker in Spain was forty-three cents an hour and the salary of a pawn was twenty-nine cents an hour.²⁸ Thus, the masses of workers and the urban middle class began to combine work time with the enjoyment of entertainment options including movies that would soon become one of the most successful.²⁹ Regarding the main theaters in Madrid that cultivated small forms we find some of the most famous as the Apolo, La Zarzuela, the Eslava, the Martín and La Comedia. The Apolo theater opened on March 23, 1873. It had a capacity of about two thousand two hundred seats, and an ornamentation where marble staircases, a beautiful foyer and a large stage equipped with a complex machinery to perform works of scenic difficulty were present. These technical advances contributed to make the Apolo one of the best theaters in Madrid; It was not in vain called "the cathedral of the small forms." The theater in Alcalá street fluctuated between three acts operetta and one act operetta until the latter eventually prevailed in the eighties until about 1905, when this theatrical form began to decline and the so-called double sections or works in two acts replaced the usual one-act plays.

²⁴ Premiered in 1905 and placed in Concepción Jerónima street, between the centric Toledo and Atocha streets, was one of the best cinema halls in Madrid.

²⁵ RAMOS ALTAMIRA, I.: *El mejor ventrílocuo del mundo*. Paco Sanz en los teatros de Madrid (1906-1935), Editorial Club Universitario, San Vicente (Alicante), p. 32.

²⁶ GONZÁLEZ LÓPEZ, P.: *Los inicios del cine en España (1896-1909)*, Liceus, Servicios de Gestión, Barcelona, 2005, p. 39.

²⁷ *El Arte del Teatro*, 15 de agosto de 1907.

²⁸ DÍEZ PUERTAS, E.: *Historia social del cine en España*, Editorial Fundamentos, Madrid, 2003, p. 28.

²⁹ BENET, V.: *El cine español: una historia cultural*, Espasa Libros. S.L.U., Barcelona, 2012, p. 28.



Portico of the Apolo Theatre in Madrid in the early twentieth century. Picture taken from the website www.fotomadrid.com.

The Teatro de la Zarzuela was built in Jovellanos Street with a capacity of three thousand spectators. Although it was designed to perform Spanish operetta in three acts, other forms such as opera and one act operetta were also premiered. Until 1888 the one act operetta did not begin to cultivate, consolidating around 1895 when this variety was in decline and the Alvarez Quintero were trying to bring back the public. The *Eslava*, meanwhile, was opened in 1871 by Bonifacio Eslava, Hilarión Eslava's brother. It was located in the Pasadizo de San Ginés and gathered a particularly frivolous public due to performances with high doses of comic "spicy" toys that were part of its repertoire. Hence the popular phrase of Menegilda "I'm waiting for you at the *Eslava* drinking coffee", from the famous Spanish operetta *La Gran Vía*.³⁰ Although works and styles of all kinds were represented in the beginning, it soon became the temple of the sicaliptic genre and, consequently, modest people ran away with consternation. The sections of theaters by the hour in which "spicy" and bawdy works were staged were all the rage in a coliseum that was gradually declining its preferences in favor of parodies, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The very famous operetta *La Corte del Faraón* released in 1910 belongs to this type. The Martín Theatre was founded in 1874 and its most glorious moment came in 1888 with the arrival of the *Mesejo* with all their company. From 1894 they specialized in hot shows. The sicaliptic genre got great fame at the theater in Santa Brígida street especially in the early twentieth century, having already triumphed at the *Eslava*. Finally, the Comedia Theatre opened on September 18, 1875. Since its very beginnings it lived up to its name and devoted to comedy and popular features. It gradually introduced the three acts and one act operetta forms, particularly in the early twentieth century.

3. Operetta Composers

In the late nineteenth century Madrid was a paradise for lovers of the operetta. The greatest masters of popular lyric lived and produced their major works in the capital of Spain. Some of them were at the peak of their careers as Chapí, Caballero, Chueca or Gerónimo Giménez. Others, however, began their careers with enthusiasm in the Madrid stage. The three acts operetta, despite some achievements as *La Bruja* (1887) by Ruperto Chapí, had abandoned its operatic aspirations to the overwhelming thrust of small forms. Chapí (1851) was the leading figure at the *Eslava*. His operetta *El Tambor de Granaderos*, -premiered on November 16, 1896 - reached a stunning number of four hundred representations. Also, the famous composer of Villena presented works of great importance as the lyrical farce *La Revoltosa* - premiered on November 25, 1897 or the operetta in three acts *Curro Vargas*, with libretto by Joaquín Dicenta and Antonio Paso. In addition, Chapí premiered other parts which deserve to be remembered as *Quo Vadis* (1900) and *El Puñao de Rosas* (1902). Chapí was the most gifted composer of his time. A wrestler with a refined technique and a huge production from symphonic music to opera and operetta in three acts.

³⁰ BARRERA MARAVER, A.: *Crónicas del género chico y de un Madrid divertido*, Editorial El Avapiés, S.A., Madrid, 1992, pp. 161-162.

The preludes and overtures with which his operettas were initiated became authentic concert pieces, against the little consideration that these fragments were granted, reduced to mere background music for the accommodation of the audience. However, Chapí was not a nationalist, not even a regionalist and he even forgot the land of his birth; that is why his operettas mostly represent the purism in Madrid. Moreover, teachers Manuel Fernández Caballero (1835) and Gerónimo Giménez (1854) were the main attraction of El Teatro de la Zarzuela. On November 29, 1898 Caballero premiered at the theater in Jovellanos Street his biggest hit, the operetta *Gigantes y Cabezudos*, with original text by the very famous Miguel Echegaray and Eizaguirre; while Gerónimo Giménez also had a tremendous success in the latter theater with his lyrical farce *Las Bodas de Luis Alonso*, with libretto by Javier de Burgos, released on January 27, 1897 and *La Tempranica*, an operetta with a libretto by Julián Romea, premiered on November 19, 1900.

Federico Chueca (1846) and Tomás Bretón (1850) monopolized the premieres at the Apolo. The first one presented *Agua, Azucarillos y Aguardiente* to the loyal audience at the "cathedral of small forms" original by Miguel Ramos Carrión (June 23, 1897). But nevertheless, the Madrid composer was not limited to release his brand new compositions at the renowned theater in Alcalá Street. For example, on January 20, 1900, Chueca put on stage at the Eslava *La Alegría de la Huerta*, libretto by Antonio Paso and Enrique García Álvarez and the operetta *El Bateo*, original by Antonio Paso and Antonio Domínguez (November 7, 1901). Tomás Bretón had already obtained a unanimous recognition for his operas *Los Amantes de Teruel* - with the composer's own libretto in four acts and premiered at El Teatro Real on February 12, 1889-, and *La Dolores*, premiered at El Teatro de la Zarzuela on March 16, 1895. The first one based on the famous drama by Hartzenbusch was a manifesto of the long-awaited national opera on models by Verdi and Meyerbeer featuring a beautiful native version of the romantic melodrama. The refusal of the company at El Teatro Real, based on the machinations of Arrieta, generated much controversy and delayed the release although it placed the issue of national opera in the center of the debates of the regeneration of the Spanish culture. Thus, the success of the premiere of *Los Amantes de Teruel* was a milestone in the Spanish music. In addition, the Salamanca composer, defender of the national opera composed operetta as well. In this sense, Bretón garnered a resounding success for his operetta *La Verbena de la Paloma*, -with libretto by Ricardo de la Vega-, premiered at the Apolo theatre on February 17, 1894. Apparently the piece had been rejected by Chapí, then immersed in the war over copyright. The popular wit and freshness of the work formed the basis of his immense success.³¹

At the same time a number of young composers such as Vicente Lleó (1870), Amadeo Vives (1871), Rafael Calleja (1870), José Serrano (1873), Pablo Luna (1879), Manuel Penella (1880) or Reveriano Soutullo (1880) - to name only a few, were trying to break into the capital, approaching the opera house and sharing the billboard with the most illustrious names of the moment. Valencian composer Vicente Lleó Balbastre was the main architect of the sicaliptic genre that was all the rage in the early twentieth century. His biblical operetta *La Corte del Faraón* released on January 21, 1910 at the Eslava, -at the time the temple of sicalipsis-, reached the unmatched figure of seven hundred seventy-two representations. This work was an operetta in the style of the Parisian works, not surprisingly it was based on a French operetta *Madame Putiphar* and caricatured great operas as *Aida*. The Catalan composer Amadeo Vives was noted for his operettas, especially *Maruxa*, *Bohemios* and *Doña Francisquita* considered peak works of the genre. The first one, with libretto by Guillermo Perrin and Miguel de Palacios, premiered at El Teatro de la Zarzuela on March 24, 1907. It was based on the argument of the novel *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème* by Henri de Murger, from which operas such as *La Bohème* by Puccini and the one with the same title by Leoncavallo were born. Vives was one of the composers of operetta holder of a solid job and a full musical training. Another Valencian composer who appeared with great force in the Madrid scenic panorama in the early twentieth century was José Serrano Simeón. *El Motete*, - libretto by the brothers Álvarez Quintero-, was his first success. The premiere took place on April 24, 1900 at the Apolo theater. The meteoric career of the musician born in the Valencian town of Sueca started at this very moment. Among his more than fifty operettas there were outstanding titles such as *La Reina Mora* (1903), *Alma de Dios* (1907), *La Canción del Olvido* (1918), *Los Claveles* (1929) and *La Dolorosa* (1930), the latter released at the Apolo theatre in Valencia. His inspired melodies and rich instrumentation coupled with his indescribable talent turned Serrano into the most famous musician in Madrid. Pablo Luna was one of the most prolific young operetta composers of the time. His first big success came with *Molinos de Viento*, with a libretto by Pascual Frutos, which would be an evidence of the taste change that had come over the operetta in three acts to approach the operetta in one act. His true consecration took place in 1913 with the release of his operetta *Los Cadetes de la Reina*.

³¹ ALIER, R.: *La Zarzuela, Ma Non Troppo*, Barcelona, 2011, p. 170.

His operettas showed a clear influence of the Viennese operettas. His most important work is *El Asombro de Damasco* - libretto by Antonio Paso Cano and Joaquín Abati-, based on a story from *The Arabian Nights*. Manuel Penella Moreno, son of the renowned composer Manuel Penella Raga, was also from Valencia. Penella achieved a remarkable success in Madrid with the magazine *Las Musas Latinas* (1913), with a libretto by Moncayo Cubas. In the first decade of the twentieth century some of the greatest authors of Spanish operetta disappeared as Caballero (1906), Chueca (1908) and Chapí (1909). But others such as José Serrano, Pablo Luna and Amadeo Vives, laid the foundation of a new repertoire that would arise thereafter. The changes that occurred in modern life led to adopt the name of género ínfimo (lowest genre) for magazines and light works. This kind of shows would influence operetta producing "spicy and risqué" works. Since 1910, the three acts Spanish operetta gradually recovered and replaced the so-called "theater by the hour." The audience, tired of the briefness and relaxation at the quality of this type of show, favored the reappearance of the more detailed arguments in two or three acts with a greater musical substance.

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