



*Francisco Asenjo Barbieri: Vol. I, "El Hombre y el creador"; Vol. II, "Escritos."* By EMILIO CASARES RODICIO. (Madrid: Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, n.d., 2 vol.; 497 pp., 481 pp.)

That the name of Francisco Asenjo Barbieri (1823–1894) might be in the least bit unfamiliar is one of the manifold injustices of musicology's formative Central European obsessions. He has long been known to specialists who have relied on his own pioneering musicological efforts, culminating in the *Cancionero musical español de los siglos XV y XVI* (1890), which earned him the distinction of being the first musician awarded membership in the Real Academia Española. In addition to his researches, Barbieri's personal library forms the inescapable foundation of the music collection of the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid—after Barbieri's name in the index to the published catalog (Anglés and Subirá, *Catálogo musical de la Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid*, Barcelona, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Español de Musicología, 1946) appears a single word, "passim." His zarzuela *Jugar con fuego* (1851) was the first in three acts and secured both the artistic and the financial success of the newly revitalized national music theater genre; it (and several others of Barbieri's prodigious output) has remained in the repertory to the present day. Barbieri also founded the first permanent symphonic ensemble in Madrid, the Sociedad de Conciertos, conducting, in addition to numerous premieres of works by Spanish composers, the first performances in Spain of complete Beethoven symphonies and of music by Wagner.

In recent years, however, zarzuela has received broader attention beyond Hispanic boundaries, and Barbieri in particular has benefited. His life and work is now documented in new monographs, dissertation literature, critical editions, and new productions and recordings.

At the forefront of this Barbieri revival has been the distinguished Spanish musicologist Emilio Casares Rodicio, director of the *Música Hispana* publications for the Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales. Casares has already edited two large volumes of the manuscript notes, letters, and documents known as the Legado Barbieri or Papeles de Barbieri (published in 1986 and 1988 by the Fundación Banco Exterior), materials that have been regularly pillaged in the past, often without attribution. With the present set of books, he has added a forthright, compelling biography of the man, with an overview of his creative work, and another important anthology of Barbieri's own research and writing.

After a useful and largely fair survey of existing Barbieriana, Casares begins his biography with a "human profile." Relying heavily on Barbieri's voluminous correspondence, he documents Barbieri's interests and psychology through his wide-ranging circle of friends and

colleagues. He also draws upon some of Barbieri's early, unpublished poems, which have been preserved in the archives of Adolfo Salazar in Mexico. These poems Barbieri had bequeathed to his friend Luis Carmena y Millán, who left only a tantalizing record of them. Casares publishes these poems in the second volume of this biography, and quotes them tellingly here, particularly a youthfully angry condemnation of prevailing artistic tastes set in a virtuosic chain of tercets.

The following seven chapters detail Barbieri's life and work in chronological fashion. The major discovery Casares contributes to Barbieri's hazy personal biography is the composer's certificate of marriage, although as he notes, it leaves many questions unanswered. Barbieri married Joaquina Peñalver y de la Sierra on June 4, 1875, when he was 51 years old. His bride was 38 and the widow of Ramón Casans y Aizón, who had died 19 months earlier. According to his correspondence, Barbieri had a relationship—often tempestuous—with Dña. Joaquina going back at least to 1861. Canon law and social strictures of the time made divorce difficult if not impossible; clearly the couple had to await the death of Casans and then a decent period afterwards to formalize their relationship. They did so virtually in secret, however, with longstanding friends and colleagues finding out much later, as correspondence indicates.

They did not have children, although Barbieri had an illegitimate daughter, Carmen Asenjo Orallo. This daughter is not mentioned in any of Barbieri's own papers. Barbieri's death certificate states that she was the child of the composer's first marriage, to a Juana Orallo, but Casares is undoubtedly correct in suggesting that this was a polite fiction. As a young man, Barbieri was enamored of one Pilar Acedillo, but she died before they could marry. His poetry and correspondence also indicates a constant interest in other women.

Casares deals with Barbieri's pioneering symphonic and concert work in engrossing detail, as he does Barbieri's musicological research and writing, particularly of the justly famous *Cancionero*. The tenth chapter of the book is devoted to Barbieri as a musicologist and bibliophile, and the author makes clear the pivotal importance of Barbieri to Spanish music history, not simply as a collector of materials, but in establishing rigorous scholarly standards for handling the data.

There is little substantive analysis of Barbieri's own works in this book. As each zarzuela comes up in the chronological biography, Casares outlines its musical contents. He does give much valuable information about Barbieri's librettists, and, for the major works at least, quotes pertinent contemporary reviews. In the few places where he offers any musical details, he does so in summary gleanings from other secondary sources. In his final chapter, Casares discusses Barbieri's dramatic concepts,





largely on the basis of literary rather than musical texts. He also summarizes the number and kind of Barbieri's works and makes general remarks about style and form, again drawing heavily on previous work. He decorates the chapter with a few small schematic diagrams of individual acts or numbers, which merely describe the subject without coming to any particular conclusion.

Instead of a works list organized by genre or medium, Casares provides chronological and alphabetical catalogs of Barbieri's compositions, to which he has been able to add a few small songs and solo piano pieces. These lists are largely unexceptional, although to date Barbieri's first stab at a zarzuela, *Felipa*, as "ca. 1842," when it missed its only chance at performance by remaining unfinished in 1843, seems a misdirection. Casares also includes in these lists (and in his quantitative summaries) all the works in which Barbieri collaborated with other composers, sometimes very much as a junior partner.

The following list of Barbieri's writing about music is also ordered chronologically, and Casares has been able to add a few more pieces of criticism. He then notes without comment three librettos by Barbieri—*Felipa* (again dated ca. 1842, more accurate here in terms of the libretto only), *Numancia* (1849), and *Gli amanti di Teruel* (1863). The latter two have been known only from Carmena y Millán's listing, and have turned up in the Salazar collection in Mexico. Both cry out for additional study and explanation. Barbieri's interest in the "tragedia lírica" *Numancia* in 1849 may be understandable, although what relationship it bears to Cervantes's work of the same name would be worth examining. Given Barbieri's highly visible and often dogmatic role in the longstanding zarzuela/opera controversy, his writing a three-act opera libretto (in Italian?!) in 1863 merits at least some discussion, particularly in light of the caustic criticisms Barbieri later leveled against Tomas Bretón's opera *Los amantes de Teruel* (libretto adapted from the Hartzensbusch drama), which came to the Teatro Real translated into Italian as . . . *Gli amanti di Teruel*. In any case, it is not clear whether these are in fact actual librettos written by Barbieri, or only manuscript copies of the originals.

Casares's bibliography is plainly a list of sources used and mentioned in the text, rather than any effort at a comprehensive list of materials on Barbieri or the zarzuela; the most curious omission would be that of José López Calo, who wrote the Barbieri article in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and contributed an essay to one of Casares's previous collections of Barbieriana.

The index is more problematic, being of names only and at that often surnames only. The table of contents is detailed enough to serve as an outline of the book, but the lack of a subject index does make it difficult to track recurring subjects. The name index has its small lapses

and inconsistencies, such as "Spitta" occurring twice, once well in advance of its alphabetical position. It is also not complete; missing, for example, is the famous tenor Manuel García, who does in fact appear in the book in several places. Other omissions that seem to leap out from such an index are real—Pablo de Sarasate does indeed go unmentioned in the text. The career of the celebrated violinist intersects that of Barbieri at several times, most significantly in the case of Sarasate's *Habenera*, Opus 21, No. 2, which is an uncredited, but fairly literal, arrangement of Barbieri's "Te llevaré a Puerto Rico," from *El hombre es débil*.

Casares applies, somewhat inconsistently, Spanish spellings and even translations to the names in the index. Thus the single name "Carlos II" provides references to both the expected Spanish Habsburg ruler and also to the English Stuart monarch (and Cromwell becomes "Cronwell"). More important, the main text is also Spanish only—all quotations are translated, without the original language, and in some cases Casares omits a precise reference to the original. This is troubling, since a check reveals that some of these translated quotations are truncated, with sentences cut short and misplaced emphasis.

The second volume of this biography brings together a generous and representative collection of Barbieri's own elegant and witty writing. Casares provides only a three-page introduction, detailing the sources of the material and, in the case of the poetry, summarizing matters of style and form.

The first section is Barbieri's history of the zarzuela from 1839 to 1863 as found in manuscripts 14077, 14078, and 14079 of the Papeles de Barbieri in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid. Here finally we have published the invaluable, addictively readable account on which all informed writing on the subject since is based. Indeed, there is some redundancy here, since Casares quotes this material (without page references) at great length in the first volume of his study.

In the second section, Casares publishes the poetry that Barbieri gave Luis Carmena y Millán and which passed into the important archives of Adolfo Salazar in Mexico. Some of these poems are epistolary and could use some annotation regarding the many references they contain to Barbieri's colleagues and work. Others are witty ephemera, some highly ribald ("pornográficas" was evidently Barbieri's own frank description). In his commentary, Casares suggests that these poems are all unpublished, but they include the narrative "Romance de ciego," which appeared in *El Romancero de la Guerra de Africa* (pp. 362–380), published in Madrid in 1860—there is also no mention of this poem or its publication in the first volume of this biography. (The discussion of Barbieri's published non-musical writing in the first volume is limited and the list incomplete.)



The third part of this volume gathers much of Barbieri's published musical writing, omitting the early music criticism and some of the later polemics. These omissions include some of Barbieri's most flavorful and personally revealing writing, but what we do have is enjoyable and still highly informative reading. There is much on zarzuela, of course, but students of Spanish Baroque dances (including those found in guitar tablatures) will find much help here. Barbieri also provides important biographical work on such diverse figures as Antonio Eximeno, Gaspar de Aguilar, Félix Máximo López, and Juan del Encina.

Mechanically, these are handsome books, although the typesetter did Casares no favors with those cramped diagrams. There are a number of illustrations in the first volume, including photograph portraits, score covers, and music facsimiles. The signed photograph on page 374 is reversed, and the photograph of Luis Mariano de Larra on page 318 misidentifies him as the author of *Pan y Toros*, but otherwise the illustrative material is pertinent as well as attractive. The text contains its share of typos—such as the occasional translation of 19th-century dates into the 20th century—and inconsistent spellings.

There is plenty of room here to disagree with Casares about some of his generalizations, for example, concerning the *género chico* and Barbieri's works of the 1880s, and Casares's reliance on adjectival description in place of substantial musical analysis will not persuade those unfamiliar with Barbieri's work of its true merit. But that does not diminish in any way the importance and value of this work; no book could—or should—be the final words on so inexhaustible a subject. These two volumes should be foundational reading for any student of Spanish culture in the 19th century.

—JOHN HENKEN

*El sonido de lo propio. José Rolón (1876–1945). Volumen I.* By RICARDO MIRANDA (México, CENIDIM [Centro Nacional de Investigación, Documentación e Información Musical “Carlos Chávez”], 1993, 232 pp., bibl., ill.)

Owner of a doctorate awarded by the City University, London, in 1992, the distinguished author chose for his dissertation subject “José Rolón, a study of his life and music.” Two years earlier he received a master's degree with presentation of his thesis, “José Rolón, a preliminary essay.” Arduous investigation at Paris and more especially in the Rolón family archive guarded in Mexico by the composer's granddaughters, Sras. Malú Martínez Sotomayor y Rolón de Torres Izabal and Lorenza Martínez Sotomayor y Rolón, enabled Miranda to assemble in the present volume I a glistening array of documents

that for the first time establishes Rolón's true stature. Both *The New Grove Dictionary* of 1980, xvi, 118, and *Baker's Biographical Dictionary*, Eighth Edition, 1992, page 1531, profiled Rolón—but with a birth year seven years too late. At page 211 of the present invaluable anthology of documents, Miranda published Rolón's baptismal certificate dated July 29, 1876, at Ciudad Guzmán, Jalisco, certifying the composer's birth eight days previously. Thus the birthdate June 22, 1883, given in both *The New Grove* and in *Baker's* err in both year and month.

Both Otto Mayer-Serra in *Música y músicos de Latinoamérica* (1947), II, 852–855, and Nicolas Slonimsky in *Music of Latin America* (1945, 1949, 1972), 251–252, treated Rolón as a major luminary. Mayer-Serra indeed gave Rolón approximately the same space that he awarded Ponce, providing as it were program notes for *Zapotlán, 1895* (the parish in which Rolón was born), symphonic suite in three parts performed November 4, 1932, by the Orquesta Sinfónica de México, *El Festín de los Enanos* (Festival of the Dwarfs), prize-winning symphonic fairy tale premiered March 4, 1928, Silvestre Revueltas conducting, and *Cuahtémoc*, epic poem after Agustín Loera Chávez premiered January 10, 1930, by the Orquesta Sinfónica de México, Carlos Chávez conducting.

Miranda's compilation of the writings of Rolón includes the enthralling summary of Mexican music history after 1910, instigated by the Secretaría de Educación Pública in a commission dated February 23, 1942, but never published. After lengthy consideration of Mexico's symphonic orchestras that have come and gone, Rolón summarizes the history of bands, choral groups, and chamber ensembles. His reflections on composers (Ponce, Huízar, Chávez, Revueltas among nationalists; Velázquez, Carrillo, Tello, Barrios y Morales, Mejía, Miramontes, Carrasco, José A. Aguilar and nine others among traditionalists), and latest composers (Galindo, Moncayo, Ayala, Contreras, Montiel Olvera) only occasionally supply the exact dates desired by encyclopedists, but nonetheless he treated all with amenity. José Guadalupe Velázquez (*b* Hacienda de la Ceja, Querétaro, December 12, 1856; *d* Mexico City February 18, 1920) avails as “the most illustrious of Mexican sacred music composers of this century” (page 170). Juan A. Aguilar (*b* Pueblo de Cosío near Aguascalientes July 1, 1883; *d* Los Angeles September 15, 1953 [*Inter-American Music Review*, x/1, Fall–Winter 1988, page 36] enters Rolón's lists as the sole Mexican whose later years were spent in the United States.

Excellently organized, Miranda's documentation begins with Rolón's preserved correspondence from Moritz Moszkowski, Nadia Boulanger, and Paul Dukas, his teachers at Paris, continues with Rolón's reflections