



María del Carmen: Birth, Death, and Resurrection of Enrique Granados's Operatic chef d'oeuvre

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Abstract

Granados is best known to opera-goers as the composer of the musically enchanting (if dramatically lackluster) *Goyescas*, a work derived from his eponymous piano suite, both compositions having been inspired by the art and epoch of the great Spanish painter Francisco de Goya (1746–1828). However, conspicuous by a lengthy absence has been his other Spanish opera, *María del Carmen* (1898), the stagework the composer himself esteemed most. This is the opera for which Granados *should* be famous. The fact that it is not poses several questions. Why did this opera languish in obscurity for decades, being revived only in 2003—outside of Spain—and then in a revision of uncertain faithfulness to the composer's intentions? Indeed, is this the work that Granados originally conceived? If not, where is Granados's original score? And why should we care? What significance, if any, does this opera have in the history of Spanish music, culture, and even politics? The following paragraphs present the answers to these questions.

Keywords: Enrique, Eduardo, and Víctor Granados, *María del Carmen*, Josep Feliu i Codina, Nathaniel Shilkret

Resumen

Los aficionados a la ópera reconocen a Granados como al compositor de *Goyescas*, obra encantadora desde la perspectiva musical, si bien deslucida desde el punto de vista dramático. Tanto ella como la otra ópera española del músico leridano, *María del Carmen* (1898), se derivan de la suite para piano también titulada *Goyescas*. Aunque el autor estimaba más esta última ópera por su arte escénico, *María del Carmen* ha caído en una oscuridad casi absoluta durante décadas, resucitada sólo en 2003 fuera de España y basada en una partitura de dudosa fidelidad a las intenciones del compositor. El estudio presente intenta explicar la oscuridad prolongada de la ópera de 1898, responder a la cuestión de la autenticidad de la partitura empleada para su última representación, identificar el paradero de la partitura original, subrayar la necesidad de preocuparnos por este paradero como historiadores de la música y aclarar las relaciones de *María del Carmen* con la historia de la música española, con la cultura y hasta con la política de España.

Palabras clave: Enrique, Eduardo, y Víctor Granados, *María del Carmen*, Josep Feliu i Codina, Nathaniel Shilkret

Birth

Enrique Granados (1867–1916) grew up in Barcelona and came to prominence in Spain as a virtuoso pianist and promising composer, one whose creative talent first manifested in a charming set of twelve pianistic miniatures entitled *Danzas españolas*, in the early 1890s. Like his friend and

compatriot Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909), Granados realized early on that if he wanted to achieve real fame and fortune as a composer, he would have to succeed on the stage, writing incidental music, zarzuela (Spanish operetta), and/or opera. His first literary collaborator was one of the most prominent men of Spanish letters at that time, Josep Feliu i Codina (1845–97). Catalan by birth, his early theatrical works included comedies, serious drama, and zarzuela librettos, all in Catalan. He also wrote novels and worked as an editor for the Barcelona press. Mordent social satire was his specialty. In 1886 he moved to Madrid and continued to work for the press there. He began to write plays in Castilian, in which he became completely fluent. (Hence, he is also known by the Castilian version of his name, José Feliú y Codina.) He also developed a passion for regionalism in his work, and he traveled widely throughout Spain to observe people, dialects, and customs that he could incorporate into his writings. The fruit of this labor was several plays, including *Miel de la Alcarria* (1895) and *María del Carmen* (1896).¹ Granados wrote incidental music for the former and converted the latter into an opera, the libretto for which represented a considerable reduction in the text of the play and simplification of the plot.² Yet, additions were also made, mostly in terms of spectacle: a lavish procession at the end of the first act and a dance number in the fiesta of the second.

The setting of the story is a village in rural Murcia, in southeastern Spain. The opera deals with a struggle between two men, Javier and Pencho, for the love of the beautiful María del Carmen. An element of class conflict is involved, as Javier comes from the local elite, while Pencho is poor. Pencho wounded Javier in a fight and was forced to flee town. María del Carmen nursed the injured Javier back to health, not out of love but in order to save Pencho's life, upon his return. This is where the opera commences the action, with the return of Pencho from hiding in Africa. The second act centers around a fiesta featuring local folk music, and this forms the backdrop for a confrontation between Javier and Pencho. The antagonists agree to fight a duel, which is the focus of the third and final act. The similarity of this story to *verismo* operas like *Cavalleria rusticana* and *I pagliacci* is obvious, though this drama has a relatively happy ending.

The opera commences with a prelude in E major. Its triplet rhythms and modal inflections impart to it a vaguely "Oriental" character, in keeping with the drama's setting in southern Spain. One critic felt this entirely appropriate, noting that the Murcians "had much Arab in their blood."³ The orchestration is rich and distinctive in its juxtaposition of winds, strings, and harp. A novel feature of the symphonic introduction is the deployment of chorus, in imitation of *Los auroros*, a Murcian group of singers that performed during processions to morning mass. The opera uses some other novel choral effects, including off-stage chorus and choral interludes between scenes.

The first act begins with a scene infused with the popular Murcian song "El paño moruño" (The Weeping Willow), whose guitar accompaniment is suggested in the pizzicato strings. Another folk-style number is Pepuso's song "Con zaragüelles vine al mundo," in scene 3, which evokes the

¹ The play premiered at the Teatro de la Comedia in Madrid on 14 February 1896. Granados saw a production of it during one of his trips to the Spanish capital and was deeply impressed by it.

² The only copy of this is in the Centre de Documentació i Museu de les Arts Escèniques de L'Institut del Teatre in Barcelona.

³ Antonio Guerra y Alarcón, "La ópera nueva, María del Carmen," *Heraldo de Madrid*, 10 November 1898, 3.

Murcian *parranda*. The *parranda* appears in other contexts as well, including the “Canción de la Zagalica” (Figure 1) in which Fuensanta’s *parranda*-like phrases alternate with a group of three other characters (Fulgencio, Roque, and Pepuso).⁴

Allegretto
FUENSANTA

Tan a - rra pie - zo, tan pe - que - ñi - ca

Fig. 1: *María del Carmen*, Act I, Scene 6, “Canción de la Zagalica,” mm. 116–18.

The entrance of *María del Carmen* takes place in the context of a lovely sextet, while a recurring motive heralds Javier’s appearance. This tendency toward leitmotif, even if not fully worked out, reveals Wagner’s influence. Especially effective is the finale to Act I, a procession to Mass featuring *Los auroros*. Many commentators found the simplicity and grandeur of this scene most impressive.

Act II begins with a brief prelude in D. After the initial “Romanza” sung by a heartsick *María del Carmen*, the drama centers around the duet between her and Pencho, which is interrupted by the arrival of Javier and mounting tension between the rival suitors. Granados makes effective use of Murcian folk song and dance in this act as well, in the context of an outdoor fiesta. In fact, one of the published numbers from the opera was the dance from Scene 12 of Act II, marked “Tiempo algo movido de Malagueña murciana” (Figure 2). This selection is replete with characteristic Spanish rhythms in triple meter; in addition, an ensemble of mandolins and guitars provided authentic local color on stage.

Fig. 2: *María del Carmen*, Act II, Scene 12, “Malagueña murciana,” mm. 39–41.

⁴ Only the three numbers excerpted here were published during Granados’s lifetime, Madrid, Pablo Martín, 1898.

This is followed by another fetching number, the “Canción cartagenera” (Figure 3), in which Pencho sings of his undying love for María del Carmen. This actual folk song contains a well-known verse, cited by several critics as one of the highlights of the opera:

To look at you, my eyes;
 To love you, my soul;
 To lull you, my arms;
 To protect you, my sword.⁵

Fig. 3: *María del Carmen*, Act II, Scene 12, “Canción cartagenera,” mm. 259–62.

Act III commences with a lugubrious prelude featuring the menacing sound of low strings under a theme in the horns played in sixths. The woodwinds enter with phrases associated with the two antagonists, setting the stage for their confrontation in this act. Scene 1 presents an animated Bolero with chorus and guitars, followed by Pencho’s lovely Romanza. In scene 3, Pencho and María sing a duet to the accompaniment of muted strings; both are apprehensive about the coming showdown, and it is clear that María, though loving Pencho, still feels affection for Javier and does not want to see either man harmed. Javier soon appears to face Pencho in a duel. Javier’s father, Domingo, attempts to intervene and persuade Pencho to relinquish his claim; however, tragedy is only averted with the arrival of Don Fulgencio, the local doctor. He informs everyone that Javier is already at death’s door and nothing can save him. The doctor’s departure from the scene is accompanied by music that is both profoundly sad and, from a harmonic standpoint, surprisingly modern in its chromaticism.

The drama now approaches its climax, or anti-climax, as the case may be. For Javier finally realizes the futility of his suit and, abandoning all thoughts of a fight, helps the lovers flee to safety in a spirit of reconciliation. In the final scene, no. 12, Granados uses the chorus to represent justice, “as a means of exteriorizing Pencho’s guilt.”⁶

⁵ “Para mirarte, mis ojos; / Para quererte, mi alma; / Para dormirte, mis brazos; / Para guardarte, mi hierro.”

⁶ Mark Larrad: “The Catalan Theatre Works of Enrique Granados,” Ph.D. diss., University of Liverpool, 1992, 32.

Amadeu Vives (1871–1932), a highly successful zarzuela composer turned impresario and fellow Catalan now residing in the capital, was instrumental in securing the premiere of Granados’s opera in Madrid. He helped coordinate preparations for the production with Manuel Figueras, director of the opera and zarzuela company at the Teatro de Parish.⁷ Granados was assisted at rehearsals by Pablo Casals, who conducted a private performance of the work at the Teatro Principal in Madrid. *María del Carmen* formally premiered at the Parish on 12 November 1898.⁸ It was a triumphant occasion for the composer but one unfortunately not shared by Feliu i Codina, who had passed away the previous year at age 52.⁹

Diario de Barcelona reported on the premiere and noted some grumbling in the Castilian press. “Those in the know believe that the libretto is not suitable for setting to music and that the score is lacking in traditional numbers, like duos and romanzas. Instead, Granados has abused the recitative dialogue, which is the specialty of Wagner.”¹⁰ This same journalist recalled a conversation between one of the critics and Feliu i Codina after the premiere of the play two years earlier. At that time, the critic had adjured the author, “For God’s sake, don’t allow anyone to set this to music.”¹¹ In the opinion of the journalist writing for *Diario de Barcelona*, this play was not suitable material for musical theater; however, Feliu i Codina was fortunate to have Granados do the job, whether or not the job should have been done at all.

There was indeed much complaining about “Wagnerisms” in the score: continuous music with a general avoidance of separable numbers, and an emphasis on the orchestra and orchestral commentary on the drama that actually competed with the voices on an equal footing. This in particular aroused the indignation of Guillermo Conde de Morphy, secretary to the Queen, musicologist, and patron of Albéniz, Arbós, and Casals, among others. He assigned *María del Carmen* to the “Modern School” and condemned its lack of traditional forms and preference for the

⁷ Antonio Fernández-Cid: *Granados*, Madrid, Samarán Ediciones, 1956, 246.

⁸ There is a contract between the authors of *María del Carmen* in Barcelona’s Museu de la Música (Fons Granados). Another copy of the contract is currently on the market. I am grateful to Néstor Masckauchán of Tamino Autographs for sharing with me a PDF of it. It indicates that Granados was staying at San Geronimo, 13, in Madrid. For an insightful study of its Madrid reception, see Teresa Cascudo García-Villararco, “¿Un ejemplo de modernismo silenciado? *María del Carmen* (1898), la primera ópera de Enrique Granados, y su recepción madrileña,” *Acta Musicológica* 84/2 (2012): 225-51. For a critical examination of its overall performance history and reception, see that prolific author’s “Crítica musical y discurso territorial en el fin de siglo: Una ópera de Enrique Granados en Madrid, Valencia y Barcelona,” in *Palabra de crítico: Estudios sobre música, prensa e ideología*, ed. Teresa Cascudo and Germán Gan, 1–29 (Aracena: Editorial Doble J, 2014).

⁹ His family received in his stead the Cortina prize for 4,000 pesetas from the Academia de la Lengua; the previous year he had received the Piquer prize from the Real Academia Española for the play. Rubén Darío had high praise for the play as well, citing the author as a “great talent” and a “delicious musician of verse.” See his *España contemporánea*, Madrid, Biblioteca Rubén Darío, n.d., 197.

¹⁰ “Revista de Madrid,” *Diario de Barcelona*, 20 November 1898, p. 12618. In fact, it was *El Liberal* that said the public had wanted more traditional numbers, especially in the second act. “Los hombres del oficio creen que el asunto de la obra es poco musical, echan de menos algún dúo y alguna romanza de la antigua escuela y opinan que el Señor Granados ha abusado de los diálogos cantados, que son la especialidad de Wagner.”

¹¹ “Por Dios, no permita que nadie ponga música a esta obra.”

orchestra. All this he found unsuited to “Latin” taste.¹² The feature most critics did not care for at all was the extensive use of prose recitative. This was perhaps Granados’s attempt at speech-melody, but it ran counter to Spanish predilections, conditioned as they were by the *género chico*, or light zarzuela, in which musical numbers alternated with poetic spoken dialogue. Such devices led one reviewer to declare with exasperation, “All this is Wagnerian, and they should take it to the [Teatro] Real!” where Wagner’s operas were in vogue and where a Wagnerian cabal headed by critics like Antonio Peña y Goñi held court.¹³

To be sure, some commentators esteemed his orchestration and thought his skill rivaled that of “other maestros of European reputation,” such as Jules Massenet.¹⁴ Certainly his employment of Murcian folklore, like the *parranda* and the *auroras*, was the most endearing feature of the score, “giving it brilliant local color.”¹⁵ Not only did he cite or imitate local styles of song and dance, but he also employed local instruments, including a group of *bandurrias* (plucked-string instruments). This concern for authenticity was no passing fancy, for Granados and Feliu i Codina had spent time in Murcia observing and absorbing its cultural *ambiente*.¹⁶

However, if Granados’s musical efforts had passed the test, the libretto had not. The general consensus was the Feliu i Codina’s use of prose instead of poetry did not meet the lyrical exigencies of the opera. One reviewer thought that, in order to avoid a “disconnect” between the music and the words, the music “must always correspond, as Rossini said, to the ‘emotions of those who are singing.’”¹⁷ This appeal to Rossini speaks volumes about the expectations critics brought to a Spanish opera, namely, that it should behave like its Italian cousins. Perhaps they did their work too well, for *El liberal* opined that “opera is the final refuge of romanticism, and above all, it requires as a general rule the choice of a story that is truly poetic and elevated, far removed from the prosaic

¹² Morphy was writing in the first issue of *La Música Ilustrada*, which appeared on 25 December 1898.

¹³ Reported in Eduardo Muñoz, “Teatro de Parish: *María del Carmen*,” *El Imparcial*, 13 November 1898, p. 2. “¡Esto es wagneriano y deben llevarlo al Real!” In “La música de Wagner. Las cortes,” *La Ilustración Artística*, no. 897, 6 March 1899 (repr. *La vida contemporánea (1896–1915)*, Madrid, Editorial Magisterio Español, 1972, p. 54), Emilia Pardo Bazán expressed her admiration for Wagner as pre-imperial Germany’s “last genius,” one who united “technique and inspiration” to a greater degree than any other artist.

¹⁴ A., “Teatro de Parish,” *El Correo*, 13 November 1898, 2.

¹⁵ R. Blasco, *La Correspondencia de España*, 13 November 1898, p. 3. “le dan brillante color local.” However, an anonymous critic at the Barcelona production the following year and writing in *Lo Teatre Català*, 30 June 1899, p. 2, found a shocking lack of originality in Granados’s manner of utilizing folklore: “[T]he ‘Parranda’ which Señor Granados has put in his work . . . is the exact same which appears in Ynzenga’s collection of popular songs of Murcia, page 19. Yet, not only has Granados copied the melodic part but he uses the actual accompaniment composed by Don Julian Calvó.” [La ‘Parranda’ que’l Sr. Granados ha posat en sa obra y que tant rembombori entre’ls profanes ha mogut està exacta en lo tomo de *Cansóns populars* de Murcia, pàgina 19, de la obra de Ynzenga. Y no sols ha copiat la part melòdica, sino que ho ha fet de l’acompanyament degut a D. Julian Calvó.]

¹⁶ The suggestion that the librettist had been rather careless in his transformation of the play into a libretto appears in the same article that details their journey to Murcia, i.e., Muñoz, *op. cit.*, 2.

¹⁷ “Teatro de Parish: *María del Carmen*,” *La época*, 13 November 1898, 1. “[D]ebe responder siempre a sentimientos que sean de los que canten,’ como decía Rossini.”

familiarities of ordinary life.” In short, the ordinary language of the lower classes was not suited to the elevated music Granados had written.¹⁸

One critic—and fortunately for Granados, among the most influential in Madrid—was unstinting in his encomiums.¹⁹ This was Antonio Guerra y Alarcón. He found no contradiction between Granados’s “modern” approach and the provincial setting and subject matter of the drama. And, alone among reviewers, he approved the prose dialogue and use of recitative, as well as the advanced use of the orchestra to comment on and participate in the drama. Certainly he found Granados’s Wagner-indebted approach to dramatic structure more satisfying than “the solution to the problem of continuity offered by Italian opera. . . . In effect, melody runs throughout the score, a modern kind of melody whose structure follows the dramatic flow and whose varied repetitions deepen the psychology of the character or comment on the action.” Despite any German or Italian influence on the opera, Guerra y Alarcón was certain that the play and music were both “eminently Spanish,” averring that it was always more “meritorious and patriotic” to search for the story of a national opera in native literary works that deal with regional folklore than to resort to the “exotic types” one finds in foreign literature. This may well have been a jab at *Carmen*. In any case, he thought Granados had done a commendable job of fleshing out the characters and conferring on them “musical individuality.”²⁰

All the reviewers agreed that the cast acquitted itself admirably, and nearly all reported that the audience warmed to the work, interrupting it with applause and demanding the repetition of selected numbers. Granados, who conducted the opera, made five or six curtain calls already at the end of the first act, and repeated this at the conclusion of the entire opera. One newspaper exulted that as a result of the premiere, his name has found a place “in the gallery of artists of genuine renown.”²¹ This reminds us that in 1898, Granados was just 31 years old, and he was still an up-and-coming composer, not yet famous for much beyond his *Spanish Dances*. *María del Carmen* was his calling card, his announcement that he had arrived as a composer of ability and serious intent.

Yet, despite its qualified success, it did not have a long run. It appeared on 12–25, 27, 30 November; 6, 8, 17, 26 December (the performance on the 8th was a benefit for the composer and one of the singers, Puiggener); and finally on 8 January 1899. The management of the Parish, for unknown reasons, decided to pull the work from the cartel, and it never again made it onto the stage

¹⁸ J. Arimón, “Teatro Circo de Parish,” *El Liberal*, 13 November 1898, 3. “La ópera es el último refugio del romanticismo, y, por tanto, requiere por regla general la elección de un asunto verdaderamente poético y levantado, al que sean ajenas las prosáicas familiaridades de la vida común.”

¹⁹ He actually wrote two reviews, both in *El Heraldo de Madrid*. The first one appeared on 10 November (p. 3), in anticipation of the premiere, and the second on the 13th, this time on the front page, beneath a drawing of the set for Act II. The placement of the review right next to important news from the Philippines suggests that *madrileños* took their *ópera española* rather seriously.

²⁰ “[L]as soluciones de continuidad de la ópera italiana. . . . La melodía, en efecto, corre abundante por la partitura. . . . melodía a la moderna, dividida en porciones, que sigue a la creación dramática y va y viene y se repite en diferentes formas, ahondando la psicología del personaje o comentando la acción”; “eminentemente españolas”; “meritorio y patriótico”; “tipos exóticos”; “individualidad musical.”

²¹ “Teatros,” *El Correo Español*, 14 November 1898, 3. “[E]n la galería de artistas de reconocido valimiento.”

in Madrid. Granados was very upset by this and sought to revive its fortunes in the capital, but to no avail. The musicologist José Subirá speculated that the early withdrawal of the opera had to do with “incomprehension, envy, and bad faith” on the part of the theater’s management.²² Whatever the case, this was but the first episode in the work’s checkered career.

Barcelona rooted for the local boy who had made good, and they received his opera with open arms in 1899, when it opened at the Tívoli on 31 May.²³ To be sure, some Catalanists resented this opera, and there was a small but disruptive claque on opening night that registered its disapproval of the opera’s non-Catalan subject matter and stylistic proximity to the *género chico*, a despised symbol of Castilian domination. And the performance itself was not of the highest standard. One reviewer thought the chorus rather out of tune and the orchestra “insecure and weak.”²⁴ It ran for eleven more performances in June and received brief revivals throughout the year, ending with one at the Teatre Principal on 1 January 1900. In fact, it had been done in Valencia in 1899, before moving on to Barcelona. It opened at the Teatro Apolo on April 29, featuring the Parish company, and it was well received by the public and press, despite its short run of only four performances.²⁵

Granados did not give up on his favorite opera. When he traveled to New York in late 1915 to assist in preparations for the premiere of *Goyescas* at the Metropolitan Opera in January of the following year, he took along the score of *María del Carmen*, clearly in the hopes of securing its publication and production in the U.S. Nothing of the sort happened, and the score itself almost sank, literally, into ignominy. For on Granados’s return to Spain in March 1916, the steamer on which he was traveling from England to France was torpedoed by a German submarine. Though the ship remained afloat, Granados and his wife, Amparo, drowned in the Channel. Their bodies were never recovered, but their luggage survived, and among its contents was the score for *María del Carmen*. This permitted the revival of the work later on.

María del Carmen was produced at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona on 28 December 1933, and again on 28 November 1935, in anticipation of the twentieth anniversary of Granados’s death. The celebrated soprano (and former Granados protégée) Conchita Badía appeared in the title role, and Joan Lamote de Grignon conducted.²⁶ It was again produced on 1 December 1938, to

²² José Subirá, “En memoria de Enrique Granados,” *Música* 1, no. 5, May–June 1938, 17–20. “La incomprensión, la invidia y la mala fe.”

²³ It is important to bear in mind Xosé Aviñoa’s observation, in *La música i el modernisme*, Barcelona, Curial, 1985, 350, about the Catalan critics (and clearly those in Madrid as well), that though they pretended to be impartial, they were always partisans of one sort or another.

²⁴ F. Suárez Bravo, “Teatro del Tívoli,” *Diario de Barcelona*, 2 June 1899, 6137–39. “Insegura y pobre.”

²⁵ Subirá, *op. cit.*, pp. 17–20, refers to this production, but without giving further details. Confirmation of this is provided in Miriam Perandones: *Correspondencia epistolar (1892–1916) de Enrique Granados*, Barcelona, Boileau 2016, 201–02. An excellent summary of the opera and its performance history is available in Curro Carreres: “La ópera perdida de Granados: *María del Carmen*, la primera ópera del autor de ‘Goyescas’: un drama en la Huerta de Murcia,” *Cooltura*, no. 2, January 2008, 28–35.

²⁶ R.G., “‘María del Carmen,’ de Granados,” *Mirador*, 5 December 1935, 8.

commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Madrid premiere. This was during the Spanish Civil War, not long before the fall of Barcelona and Franco's victory. In announcing this 1938 production, Rafael Moragas reminded his readers that Granados had been the victim of a "totalitarian Germany," even as the besieged Spanish government was now. A few months earlier, on the twenty-second anniversary of Granados's death, Moragas had drawn a parallel between the "crime" of the submariners in the First World War and the ravages now being inflicted by German bombers on Barcelona and other Spanish cities.²⁷ In effect, Moragas conscripted the politically reluctant Granados into the Republican army, and in fact, the opera's focus on the rural poor resonated strongly with the ideology of the leftists. The final performance of *María del Carmen* took place towards the end of the Franco era, on 28 January 1967 (again at the Liceu).

Were all of these posthumous productions based on the original version by Granados? The score and parts utilized for these stagings survive in the Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, along with parts and vocal score. I first examined these materials in 1990 at the SGAE but sadly concluded that it was not the original version I had hoped to find. It later served as the basis for the orchestral and vocal scores edited by conductor Max Bragado Darman and published by the Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales in 2003. Darman's edition is remarkably elegant example of painstaking musicology, but in his critical commentary, he makes a claim that though the manuscript materials in the SGAE were unsigned, they were in Enrique Granados's hand. This is not the case, but that was not entirely clear at the time he prepared his edition, and the claim represented a certain degree of wishful thinking. But, if that was not the composer's revision, who rendered it? And what had happened to the original score? It would be impossible to say just how much the work was revised without consulting the original, but in 2003, no one knew if it was extant and where it might be. That would require some real detective work.

Death

Granados had a total of six children, four of whom were sons. In addition to Eduardo, the other musically accomplished son was Víctor (1899–1972), a cellist who fled to the U.S. during the Spanish Civil War, eventually making his way from New York to Hollywood playing in orchestras. He was touted by the American press as an "official representative of the Loyalist regime in Spain" who had come here to organize support among Loyalist sympathizers.²⁸ He also brought along some of Granados's manuscripts: the original orchestral score (in three volumes) for *María del Carmen*, the piano part for *Cant de les estrelles*, and the scores for *Romeo y Julieta* and *Torrijos*. He may have taken the music with the permission of his siblings and of his brother-in-law, Dr. Antonio Carreras, who maintained the family archive; however, Dr. Carreras later claimed that he had not authorized the actual sale of the manuscripts to anyone.²⁹

²⁷ Rafael Moragas, "María del Carmen del compositor Enrique Granados," *El Día Gráfico*, 30 November 1938, 6, and "Los crímenes de la Alemania del Kaiser los repite ahora la Alemania de Hitler," *El Día Gráfico*, 24 March 1938, 8.

²⁸ According to the *New York World Telegram*, 10 September 1938. Clipping in the files on Granados in the library of the Hispanic Society of America.

²⁹ A typed note entitled ASUNTO SHILKRET, dated Barcelona, 7 October 1982. In the Granados family archive (since donated to the Biblioteca de Catalunya).

In a letter apparently directed to his siblings, Víctor states that this music was simply languishing in obscurity and would never be heard again unless he took action.

My Father's works have been buried in the archives and we must bring them with artistic dignity into the hands of one who has influence in this country, and who realizes our fervent desire to have something done to compensate for the sacrifices of our Father to leave something for all his children.³⁰

Thus, he took them with him to New York to try to arrange performances. This would seem to be sound reasoning, except that there was no sense in taking only the piano part of *Cant de les estrelles*, leaving behind the choral and organ parts. *Torrijos* would have neither been likely to be produced or make money, as it was incidental music to an obscure play that would never gain a place on the U.S. stage. However, the family was in desperate financial straits during the Civil War, and they may have hoped he could make some money by selling them. After suffering privations and poverty in New York, he offered these to Nathaniel Shilkret,³¹ head of Shilkret Publishing in New York. Shilkret was an outstanding musician, conductor, composer, and arranger, and he had tremendous admiration for Granados's music. He thought that he could promote these works in the United States to the benefit of all concerned. In fact, he agreed to copyright the scores in the name of the heirs of Granados, to publish them, and to have them put on Victor Records, broadcast by radio. Nathaniel, of course, hoped to make some money off the investment as well. He purchased the manuscripts for one dollar on 22 January 1940, then signed a contract with Víctor giving him \$300 as an advance against the royalties from publication on 1 February 1940.³² He also helped him find work as a cellist with the Victor Orchestra.

At this time, Víctor was nearly penniless, and though he originally intended to share the advance with his family, he apparently kept it for himself. Family friend Malvina Hoffman explained it this way:

At that time Victor, who left all the money he had in Barcelona to the care of his children, under the direction of his brother-in-law, Dr. Carreras, arrived in this country with no funds and only the possibility of getting money from either his own professional work or his Father's music. After 3 yrs. of practical starvation abroad, his physical condition was so bad in America, that at that time he had a complete nervous breakdown and an attack of bronchial pneumonia, and as you can readily understand, was in desperate need of this money himself as he had no other work or means of support. Knowing that his brother-in-law had much more money than he had, and that they all understood his difficult position and bad health, he naturally felt that he

³⁰ From the Malvina Hoffmann correspondence in the Archives of the History of Art, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Los Angeles, number 250042, dated simply May 1943 and signed by Víctor. He sent a copy of this letter to Malvina, friend of his late father, who was intervening on his behalf with Shilkret. She subsequently wrote to Shilkret on 15 May 1943, and her letter is attached to Víctor's in the archive.

³¹ See his autobiography, *Nathaniel Shilkret: Sixty Years in the Music Business*, ed. Niel Shell and Barbara Shilkret, Lanham, Maryland, Scarecrow Press, 2005.

³² In a contract dated 22 January 1940, Víctor acknowledges his receipt of \$300 from Shilkret as an advance and consigns the scores to Shilkret for one dollar. In a letter from New York dated 30 November 1939 (Mm, fons Granados), Víctor explained to Antonio the reasons for his actions. In truth, there were no good reasons, only poor excuses.

could use this money in such a crisis, and pay back their share later on when the War situation cleared. He was and is acting in good faith and assured Mr. Shilkret of this at the time.³³

However, seeing that they would not benefit from this sale, the family turned against the deal. Their ensuing reluctance to cooperate with Shilkret's attempts to get *María del Carmen* performed and recorded resulted in repeated frustration; his investment came to naught, and this was a source of bitterness for years. In fact, Niel Shell, his grandson, harbors among his earliest memories Nathaniel's complaints about the Granados manuscripts and the family's intransigence. He did actually have legal rights to the scores, because Víctor had been designated by the Sociedad General de Autores y Editores in Spain as the representative of the Granados family with control over the music.³⁴ The sale of the scores to Shilkret was legal and binding.³⁵ Seeing that Víctor was going to keep the money for himself, Dr. Carreras set about trying to get the manuscripts back. Legal wrangling went on for decades between the family and the firm, but in the end, the music was never returned to the Granados family. Shilkret now wanted complete rights to the music so he could promote it as he saw fit, though by the late 1940s he was willing to sell it back for the original \$300. No deal was ever struck.

The Shilkrets did put their acquisition to some good use on 29 August 1954, when NBC Radio broadcast a performance by the NBC Concert Orchestra under Roy Shield of the Prelude to Act I of *María del Carmen*. Nathaniel Shilkret had years earlier spent about \$1,000 to have a vocal score of the opera made for the Met's consideration, and he arranged with both RCA Victor and Columbia to record the Prelude. Toscanini considered programming it on his Latin American Hour. And there was a real prospect for a U.S. performance of the whole opera, based on the original manuscript in Shilkret's possession. When the Granados descendants in Spain found out, however, that the sponsor was to be Scott Toilet Paper, they demurred. They did not want Granados's music associated with such a product. Additionally, a rumor began to spread that the manuscripts had been stolen, and Columbia was reluctant to get involved.³⁶ In the end, all these plans came to

³³ From the Malvina Hoffman correspondence cited above. This was from the transcript of a 23 April 1943 phone conversation with Barbara Shilkret. Other correspondence in the Hoffman archive suggests political difficulties, as Dr. Carreras was a Franco sympathizer, and the Franco government itself took a dim view of Víctor because he had been a Republican.

³⁴ A letter in the Shilkret family archive from Pedro Villa Fernández, representative of the Sociedad General de Autores y Editores to Antonio de la Cruz Martín, Spanish Consul General in New York, dated 4 December 1940, states, "I give permission to Mr. Victor Granados to represent all rights to the music of his late father, Enrique Granados," as long as Villa Fernández held that office. Thereafter, Víctor would have to make new arrangements with Villa Fernández's successor. However, since he sold the manuscripts to Shilkret during Villa Fernández's term, the sale was valid and binding.

³⁵ The signed contract is in the Shilkret family archive. A large quantity of correspondence between the Shilkrets and Granadoses, and their legal representatives, exists in the Museu de la Música (Fons Granados) in Barcelona.

³⁶ This is clear from a letter of 1 November 1948, from Víctor to Antonio (Museu de la Música, Fons Granados, Shilkret file). The Spanish Embassy was apparently the source of the rumor. In this same letter we learn of Shilkret's willingness to sell the scores back for \$300, an offer the family apparently declined, feeling that they should not have to pay for something they considered to be their own property.

naught. Shilkret laid the blame squarely on Víctor, who had “made our firm look ridiculous.”³⁷ Even just before the broadcast in 1954, Arthur Shilkret wrote in obvious desperation to Víctor, seeking his cooperation and approval for a recording of some of *María del Carmen* that they had lined up. He recalls that,

In our previous efforts, prolonged discussions and communications with Spain on details have destroyed opportunities to get something accomplished, and we hope that both a reasonable attitude and prompt answer can be obtained so that several months of contacting done by us will not again end in futility. As you know, we have an investment of money and time which we made in good faith, but we have been blocked by “red tape.” To the heirs of Enrico [sic] Granados it presents a work that brings no income, and to us it presents an investment and property which has been a loss to date.

And it would continue to be a loss. Nothing beyond the radio broadcast ever eventuated with any of the music, either in concerts or recordings or publications. Malvina Hoffman reported in a letter of 8 October 1955 that Shilkret had agreed to release the music so that the Hispanic Institute of America could sponsor publication of it. Another letter, dated 16 January 1956, states that the deal is going forward, with the collaboration of José Iturbi. This no doubt gave rise to later speculation (reiterated by Max Darman in the introduction to his edition) that *María del Carmen* might have been in the possession of the Hispanic Institute. It was not and is not, and nothing ever happened in connection with it. The family continued to believe that though they had no rights to the manuscripts, they retained rights to all publications of Granados’s music. Hence, their ongoing resistance to Shilkret’s attempts to publish and promote the music.³⁸ The Shilkrets tired of the chase, though the Granados family continued to try to get back the scores. However, in 1979 the Shilkrets said they were not sure they could locate the manuscripts. In fact, due to a fire in 1973 at one of their stores, the scores might have been destroyed.³⁹

In the 1980s, American pianist and Granados scholar Douglas Riva established contact with the family (Barbara Shilkret, daughter-in-law of Nathaniel) in an attempt to track down the missing music. However, according to Niel, his late mother had no real understanding of the family business or any idea where such things might be stored, so she tended not to respond to inquiries. Fifteen years later, I would take up the cause in the process of writing my Granados biography.⁴⁰ At the suggestion of Riva, I contacted Barbara, who referred me to her son, Niel Shell. Though a mathematics professor with no background in music, he had become interested in his grandfather’s career and was willing to help track down the missing music. At last there was a glimmer of hope.

³⁷ Letter from Nathaniel Shilkret to Malvina Hoffman, 25 March 1943. Shilkret expressed a desire to “give the splendid Granados music to the world.”

³⁸ This is clear from a memorandum in French from a Gerard de La Chapelle, representing the SGAE and dated 24 February 1966 (Museu de la Música, Fons Granados, Shilkret file).

³⁹ In a letter from de La Chappelle to Dr. Carreras of 31 August 1979 (Museu de la Música, Fons Granados, Shilkret file).

⁴⁰ See *Enrique Granados: Poet of the Piano*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2006/paperback 2011; available in Spanish translation by Patricia Caicedo, *Enrique Granados: Poeta del piano*, Barcelona, Boileau, 2016.

Resurrection

Indeed, much light has now been shed on the state of these manuscripts, as I was able to meet with Niel in New York in December 2003 and examine what is left of them; follow-up meetings between Douglas Riva and Shell produced further discoveries. As a result, the incidental music for *Torrijos* was recovered, as was the crucial piano part for *Cant de les estrelles*, finally permitting a revival and recording of that gorgeous masterpiece, thanks to Riva's performance and promotion of it.⁴¹ Unfortunately, no trace of *Romeo y Julieta* has surfaced, but it may turn up eventually.

After this successful recovery, Riva and I urged Niel Shell to be on the lookout for *María del Carmen*. Six years passed, however, and the issue seemed once again to be in doubt. However, in the fall of 2009, Niel discovered the three volumes in their store and immediately notified Riva, who then contacted me. I proceeded to New York City, examined and purchased the scores, and flew back to Los Angeles the same day. They had suffered some damage from smoke and water but were otherwise complete and intact. I immediately conveyed them to Special Collections at the University of California, Riverside, which has restored, rebound, and digitized them, thus making the score available for free to anyone with an Internet connection:

https://ucr.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=alma991027748849704706&context=L&vid=01CDL_RIV_INST:UCR&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&isFrbr=true&tab=Everything&lang=en

The three volumes are each 36cm tall x 28cm wide (14 in. x 11 in.). Volume one has 264 pages; volume two, 240 pages; and volume three, 120 pages. Each volume is cloth bound. The first act is signed by "E. Granados" on the last page, but not dated. The second act is signed by "Enrique Granados" on the first page, again undated. The final act is not signed by the composer, though the copyist, a certain Guerrero, signed underneath the final measure.

This manuscript is the basis for the edition being typeset by Borja Mariño and slated for publication in 2020 by Tritó Edicions in Barcelona. Careful examination reveals that there are significant differences between the original and the revision. We now know from extant manuscripts that Granados's opera was extensively revised by his son Eduardo (1894–1928), perhaps with the assistance of the Catalan composer Francesc Montserrat i Ayarbe (1879–1950). Eduardo obviously felt that the work required reorchestration and other modifications to enhance its dramatic impact and color. Evidence of this is at hand in an incomplete full-score manuscript signed by Eduardo on the cover page and providing the following information: "Empiezo la revisión y reorquestacion de esta obra en esta fecha 2 de Diciembre de 1916" (I begin the revision and reorchestration of this work on this date, 2 of December 1916). This was a little over eight months after his father's death. This was preceded by a vocal score of the same material, dated already 16 July 2016.⁴² Both manuscripts correspond exactly to the revision in the SGAE.

⁴¹ Naxos 8.570533 (2009). It also features Granados's *Salve Regina*, *Romanza*, and *Escena religiosa*. The CD was nominated for a Grammy in 2009.

⁴² The orchestral score was located at the Centre de Documentació Musical in Barcelona when I first examined it in 2003, but it is no longer there, and its current whereabouts are unknown. The incomplete vocal score is located in the Museu de la Música in Barcelona, Sig. M-Gra-101. I retain photocopies of both scores.

Clearly, the original score had been recovered from his parents' belongings in France and returned to the family. Only with Enrique's score at hand could Eduardo have revised it. Still, the orchestral score goes only as far as rehearsal number 28, Act I, Scene 1; yet, it corresponds exactly with the complete orchestral score at the SGAE, the one published by Bragado Darman. So we can say with confidence that the SGAE version was a posthumous revision by the composer's son.

A question we can never answer but must nonetheless ask at this juncture is this: was Eduardo making changes that he and his father had previously discussed and agreed upon? That seems unlikely. Granados was completely absorbed in his preparations for the New York premiere of *Goyescas* before he sailed to the United States in November of 1915. Eduardo was only 21 years old then, and there is no reason to believe that Enrique would have felt the need to consult with his young son about any possible revision of *María del Carmen*, especially considering that Enrique believed he would have plenty of time to do that after he returned. It is true that he dreaded ocean voyages and feared he would not return alive from this one, but if he truly believed that, he would not have taken the score for *María del Carmen* with him (or his wife, for that matter). And the fact that he did so in hopes of interesting the Metropolitan Opera in a future production of it suggests that he had sufficient confidence in the work as it was, and he did not feel that it required extensive revision before being shown to the Met. Rather, Eduardo probably felt that he could both preserve and perpetuate his father's musical legacy while at the same time spreading his wings as a budding composer by revising this score, thus enhancing his own credentials and showing that the proverbial acorn had not fallen far from the paternal oak tree.

My purpose here, though, is not to present a thorough comparison of the two versions, as that would require a separate essay, so numerous are the changes. That is a project for another publication and researcher. Rather, I summarize the salient points of comparison below, which definitely establish the significant differences between the two scores, thereby justifying the publication of the original version in hopes of facilitating its revival. Only in that way can we grasp and appreciate Enrique Granados's achievement and understand why critics and audiences reacted to it the way they did.

Eduardo's substantial alterations to his father's opera are readily apparent in three principal areas: 1) orchestration; 2) recomposition of existing material, including the addition of new music; and 3) altering of the scenic structure. These are already conspicuous in the opera's first act.

Orchestration

For instance, in the Preludio to Act 1, Eduardo inserts an extensive harp solo starting at m. 51 and eliminates the string and harp parts beginning at m. 87. In Scene 6, he adds brass and winds at m. 16. This is one of many instances where the thickening of the orchestral texture gives the score a Straussian quality, making it more *au courant* in comparison to Enrique's leaner, Italianate approach.

Recomposition

There is considerable recomposition of the opening of Scene 7, with separation of the orchestral parts from voices, using the former as an introduction and adding silence beneath the

initial vocalizing. Extensive recomposition continues with the addition of new material and restructuring of scenes, with Scene 7 continuing well into the original Scene 8.

Altering of musico-dramatic structure

The rest of the revision features all such changes and represents a substantial recomposition of the opera. As a consequence, the original Act I has sixteen scenes and a “scena última.” The revision consolidates the scenes and has only fifteen total. No changes to the drama itself were made in the revision, which is to say that the plot remains the same. However, one finds that the original sequence of scenes and numbers has been modified, though without any identifiable improvement in the musico-dramatic impact of the work.⁴³

Insofar as Granados’s opera has not been heard for well over a century, its resurrection is overdue and highly anticipated. We now know what happened to *María del Carmen*. What happens next is clearly up to us.

Clark, Walter Aaron. “*María del Carmen*: Birth, Death, and Resurrection of Enrique Granados’s Operatic chef d’oeuvre.” *Diagonal: An Ibero-American Music Review* 4, no. 1 (2019): 75–89.

⁴³ I am indebted to Spanish conductor and musicologist Borja Mariño for typesetting the work for publication. In the process, he became quite an expert on it, and his valuable insights are available in his article in this issue.