The Genesis of Liszt's Spanish Works

Unveiling the Sources for Romancero Espagnol and Feuille Morte[1]

by Antonio Simón

In the Autumn of 1844 Liszt embarked on a six-month tour through the Iberian Peninsula which took him to Madrid and Lisbon, and to at least eight more cities playing some thirty-five recitals – quite a remarkable number even during his Glanzzeit. Although there is already a sizeable amount of literature on the topic[2], we are persuaded that many aspects of this tour remain to be clarified and thus allow a more complete picture of the touring virtuoso to emerge. This conviction has led us to conduct a lengthy research on this matter, this article being just one of the preliminary results stemming from it.

A commonly accepted idea about the tour seems to be that Liszt was not composing particularly actively while in Iberia. Both Robert Stevenson and Alan Walker number only three compositions as Liszt's Iberian output: *Le Forgeron* for male chorus and piano S81, an *Album leaf in A-flat* – some of which was later used for the first theme of his first *Ballade* – and the *Grosse Concert-Phantasie über spanische Weisen* S253[3]. In Walker's own words[4]:

> *Although Liszt languished in Iberia for six months, he composed only three works during the entire period, a symptom of his unsettled frame of mind.*

Another received notion is that the *Grosse Concert-Phantasie* and all of Liszt's works of Spanish derivation were based on stereotypes rather than on thematic material he could have actually collected *in situ*. In this article we will challenge these assumptions in view of some new data which have recently come to light, trace some hitherto hidden connections between Liszt's works and his touring activities across the Iberian Peninsula, and attempt to ascribe actual sources to the pieces based on Spanish themes he wrote there. Let us begin by taking what will seem a detour and have a look at the repertoire Liszt played during this tour.

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1 The author wishes to acknowledge Leslie Howard and Michael Short for their kind and always enthusiastic support of this research. Many thanks also to Gert Nieveld and James Parakilas for the enriching correspondence we have shared.

2 In English, we should acknowledge studies by Robert Stevenson and Alan Walker; and some Spanish scholars like Tarazona, Moreno, Ranch, Pajares, Salvador, Lliurat and others have also worked on it to some extent.

3 See STEVENSON, Robert, *Liszt at Madrid and Lisbon: 1844-45,* Musical Quarterly, 65:4 (1979: Oct), p. 510-512.

4 See WALKER, Alan, *Franz Liszt The virtuoso years 1811-1847*, Cornell University Press, 1987, p. 414.

Liszt's Iberian repertoire

Liszt's recital programs in Iberia consisted mainly of Italian opera fantasies and transcriptions. Apart from those, just a couple of pieces by Weber, Chopin and others based on national airs were featured. No "serious" music at all: none of the Beethoven, Bach, Schubert or Schumann we can find in some of his Central-European programs[5] were heard in the Peninsula, nor any of his loftier compositions. Apparently, Liszt restricted himself to this lighter sort of repertoire whenever he considered a particular audience incapable of appreciating a certain depth. For example, the pieces he played in Spain were exactly the same as those he played in the South-West of France just before and after his Iberian tour[6].

Of course, his most celebrated warhorses (*Galop Chromatique*, the *Robert le Diable Vals Infernale*, the *Wilhemm Tell Ouverture* or the *Norma* and *Don Juan Fantasies)* were featured wherever he presented himself on stage, and those showy pieces were the backbone of his repertoire throughout his career as a touring virtuoso. Yet, whenever he felt the audience could manage more serious music he would include some. Much to our dissatisfaction, that was not the case in Spain in the 1840's: Liszt found the country in a decadent state of affairs, devastated by three decades of turmoil which began with the Napoleonic Wars, and as far as the musical scene is concerned, it was to a large extent dominated by Italian opera, the only other point of interest being dances and songs based on local tunes. Even the Zarzuela was absent from the theatres, after decades of oblivion before its revival only a few years later.

In Madrid, very few instrumental concerts were held: in the decade prior to Liszt's tour, no more than six or seven took place in the capital city; the situation improved only slightly at the beginning of the 1840s, but still no more than a handful took place every year. No Beethoven or Schubert was heard in Spain at all in those days. On the other hand, an astounding number of Italian operas where performed in Madrid and all around Spain in the '30s and '40s[7]. Every major city had an opera company and a multitude of passionate *dilettanti*. In light of this, it becomes perfectly understandable why Liszt would play mostly Italian opera Fantasies all around the Peninsula – what else was he supposed to do?

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[5] See for example: SAFFLE, Michael, *Liszt in Germany: 1840-45, a story in sources, documents, and the history of reception.* Pendragon Press, 1994, p. 188, or WALKER, *Op. Cit.*, p.372.

[6] DUFETEL, HAINE et al. *Franz Liszt, un saltimbanque en province*, Symâetrie, 2007, p.208.

[7] 'Astounding' meaning hundreds in this case. For a complete list see CAMBRONERO, Carlos, *Crónicas del tiempo de Isabel II*, La España Moderna, Madrid, 1896, pp. 27-33 and 99-113.

In the Table below is a summary of the repertoire Liszt presented in Iberia[8]. Note that the list is incomplete because the actual repertoire for some of his recitals remains partially or totally unknown. Still, the available information is quite representative of the fashion in which he presented himself. The repertoire has been arranged in four main blocks[9]. The first corresponds to the Italian opera fantasies and transcriptions[10], which represented roughly two thirds of what he played in the Peninsula. The second block includes the only three featured works by other composers: a Chopin *Mazurka*[11] and the *Aufforderung zum Tanz* and *Konzertstück* by Carl Maria von Weber. The third block is made up of original pieces: the omnipresent *Galop Chromatique* and two works in the Hungarian style[12].

Finally, the most commonly overlooked and possibly most interesting aspect of Liszt's Spanish repertoire is, as we shall see shortly, that presented in the fourth block of our Table: the improvisations included at the end of some of his recitals on themes suggested by the audience, and a group of mysterious works named "Caprichos" or "Fantasía a Capricho" to which almost no attention has so far been drawn in the literature; moreover, on the rare occasions when these works have been discussed they have usually been identified rather arbitrarily (as, for example, in the case of Robert Stevenson, who compares the *Capricho* played in Madrid with the *Hungarian Rhapsody Nr. 11* on no apparent basis[13].)

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[8] We would like to draw attention to the fact that repertoire for concerts in Málaga and Gibraltar is herein listed (there was hitherto no proof he had played in those cities). The new data stemming from this research will hopefully be published in the near future.

[9] This table has been compiled from primary sources including concert programs and over twenty periodicals from the cities in which Liszt presented himself.

[10] The Tarantella featured in many concerts (in most if not all cases, Liszt's own transcription of Rossini's Soirées Musicales Nr. 9) has been included in this block on account of affinity.

[11] The Mazurka presented in some of the concerts could not be identified. There is also no inkling as to whether it was a single mazurka, or different ones being played at different times.

[12] The "Melodías húngaras" were probably excerpts from Magyar Dallok S242 or else the Ungarische Nationalmelodien included in S243. The "Grand Marcha Húngara" is less likely to be identified as it may correspond with a large number of Liszt compositions including S231, S232, S524, the Rákóczi-Marsch S242a, etc.

[13] See STEVENSON, Robert, Op. Cit., p.500.

	Madrid	Córdoba	Sevilla	Cádiz	Lisboa	Gibraltar	Málaga	Valencia	Barcelona
Réminiscences de Norma	✓✓✓			✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓
Grandes Variations de Bravoure sur le March des Puritains	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
Introduction and Polonaise I Puritani	✓✓								✓
Réminiscences de Don Juan	✓			✓					
Réminiscences de Lucrezia Borgia	✓			✓✓					✓
Réminiscences de Lucia de Lammermoor					✓			✓	✓
Andante from Lucia di Lammermoor	✓	✓		✓					
Fantaisie sur des motifs de La Sonnambula	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓			✓	✓✓
Réminiscences de Robert le Diable (Valse Infernale)	✓		✓	✓	✓✓				✓
Réminiscences de Norma 2 pianos	✓				✓				
Variations on La Donna del Lago 2 pianos	✓								
Grande fantaisie sur des motifs de La serenata e L'orgia des Soirées musicales									✓
Ouverture Wilhemm Tell - ROSSINI	✓✓	✓		✓	✓✓		✓	✓	✓✓
Tarantella – ROSSINI				✓	✓				✓
Mazurka – CHOPIN	✓			✓	✓				✓
Aufforderung zum Tanz – WEBER			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Konzertstück – WEBER	✓			✓	✓				✓
Grand Galop Chromatique	✓✓	✓	✓		✓✓		✓	✓	✓✓
Rakoczy March	✓✓			✓✓					
Melodías húngaras (Magyar Dallok)	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
El Capricho	✓✓								
Capricho sobre temas de la Jota Aragonesa		✓		✓					
Fantasía a capricho									✓✓✓
Fantasía sobre un Vals del Sr. Soriano		✓							
Improvisations	✓				✓			✓	✓

Fantasías, Caprichos and... Souvenirs

Let us now take a closer look at the four pieces listed in this last block: *El Capricho*, the *Capricho sobre el tema de la jota aragonesa*, the *Fantasía a Capricho* and the *Fantasía on a vals by Mr. Soriano*. In Madrid, Liszt included a piece by the title of *El Capricho* in at least one of his programs[14], the one offered on November 21 at the Teatro del Circo, a charity fundraiser advertised as Liszt's last appearance in the capital city[15]. This is the only *Capricho* alluded to in Spain with this simple title and the only one where there is no hint as to its actual content.

Liszt presented himself in Córdoba immediately after Madrid in a single recital at the Liceo de Musical y Literario, whose music department was chaired by the Spanish composer Mariano Soriano Fuertes. In the special edition of the journal *El Liceo de Córdoba* of December 12, 1844, the reviewer (probably Soriano himself, being as he was the journal's director as well as its editor) wrote:

> *El Sr. Soriano Fuertes anunció al público que su amigo Liszt deseoso de corresponder a las demostraciones de aprecio que el público cordobés le había manifestado tocaría antes de la Galop cromática una pieza, y la jota aragonesa. El público acogió esta idea con frenesí y a la presentación del inmortal Liszt en el escenario, los brabos [sic] y aplausos eran estremados. El Sr. Liszt improvisó sobre un Vals del Sr. Soriano Fuertes una lindísima y brillante fantasía, después tocó la jota admirablemente, en seguida la Galop cromática y para concluir hizo un popurit [sic] del Vals la jota y el Galop que dejó a los espectadores llenos de asombro sin saber levantarse de sus respectivos asientos. Un cuarto de hora era pasado desde que se echó el telón y el público todavía estaba en el salón sintiendo tener que marchar a sus casas.*[16]

So in Córdoba Liszt improvised a *Fantasy on a Vals by Soriano Fuertes* and also played an unidentified composition based on the *Jota aragonesa.* Some days after this recital, at the Teatro Principal in Cádiz, he played what was programmed[17] as *Capricho sobre el tema de la jota aragonesa*, again an unidentified work on this popular theme, perhaps related to the one previously played in Córdoba.

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14 See *La Esperanza,* Madrid, 21/11/1844.

15 He in fact presented himself again the 22nd both at the Liceo Artístico y Literario and in a private session held at Colonel and deputy Cabrero's home (and not 'Carnerero' as Tarazona spells it– see RUIZ TARAZONA, Andrés, *Liszt in Madrid,* in Revista de Musicología (Madrid), X, 3 (1987), pp.885).

16 *Mr. Soriano Fuertes announced to the audience that his friend Liszt – in recognition of the esteem that the public of Córdoba had shown him – would play another piece before the Galop cromática and the Jota aragonesa. This suggestion was received enthusiastically and when the immortal Liszt presented himself on stage, the brabos [sic] and clapping were deafening. Mr. Liszt improvised on a Vals by Mr. Soriano Fuertes, a very beautiful and brilliant Fantasy, then played the Jota admirably , and the Galop cromática immediately afterwards.To conclude he made a popourit [sic] of the Vals, the Jota and the Galop which left the spectators astounded and unable to leave their seats. A quarter of an hour passed and the public was still in the "Salón" unwilling to go home.*

17 See *El Ómnibus,* Cádiz, 04/01/1845.

After this appearance in Cádiz there was a long period during which there was no apparent record of Liszt playing any such *Caprichos and Fantasies*. It was not until the final days of the tour, in Barcelona, that they reappear in his recital programmes and reviews. In the concerts on April 11 and 18 in Barcelona a piece called *Fantasía a Capricho* was included. A journalist wrote this enthusiastic revue in the journal *El Mundo Musical* on April 13:

> *La pieza que más nos gustó de cuantas tocó el célebre Liszt fue una Fantasía sobre motivos de la Norma; y luego, perdonesenos nuestra debilidad, si así puede llamarse, nos gustó un capricho sobre la canción española y popular titulada: Los toros del puerto, que fue tan bien egecutada y tan superiormente adornada, que lejos de perder un ápice de su gracia andaluza, adquirió entre las manos de Liszt un nuevo encanto, que arrancó vivísimos aplausos. Confesamos que al ver apreciada nuestra música española por tan eminente artista estrangero, sentimos infinitamente alagado nuestro amor propio nacional; y damos por ello al Sr. Liszt las más sinceras gracias en hombre del arte, y nos atrevemos a decir de todos los artistas españoles.*[18]

In the number of April 20, he wrote once again:

> *El insigne Sr. Liszt se hizo admirar como siempre, y como siempre arrebató a su extasiado auditorio, que le colmó de bravos y aplausos en las dos piezas que tocó. Estas dos piezas (Fantasía sobre motivos de la Norma y un capricho sobre Los Toros del Puerto, de Salas) fueron precisamente las que digimos en nuestro número último nos habían gustado más, al hablar del anterior concierto dado en la Sociedad por el Sr. Liszt.*[19]

So if in Córdoba and Cádiz Liszt played compositions based on the Jota aragonesa theme, the *Fantasía a Capricho* featured in Barcelona was based on the Spanish song *Los Toros del Puerto* composed by the baritone Francisco Salas. But we shall return to this point later.

Liszt left Barcelona towards the end of April, heading for Marseilles where he continued his French tour[20], then made for Bonn where the Beethoven monument was about to be unveiled. It is interesting to note that in the recital programmes he played immediately after leaving Spain another mysterious, unidentified piece turned up under the name

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[18] *The piece we liked most was the Fantasy on themes from Norma; and then, excuse our weakness, we liked a Capricho on the Spanish popular song by Mr. Salas entitled 'Los toros del puerto' which was so superbly executed and embellished, that far from losing any of its Andalusian grace, it acquired in Liszt's hands a new charm, which was greeted with vigorous clapping. We confess that in finding our Spanish music appreciated by such an eminent foreign artist, our national spirit is flattered; and we must thank Mr. Liszt for this sincerely in the name of Spanish art and – we dare say – all Spanish artists.*

[19] *The distinguished Mr. Liszt was admired as always, and as always he enraptured his ecstatic audience, who showered him with bravos and clapping in both of the pieces he played. These two pieces (Fantasy on the themes of Norma and a Capricho on Los Toros del Puerto, by Salas) were precisely the ones we said we liked the most in our last issue, when writing about the previous concert given for this Society by Mr. Liszt.*

[20] See *La Iberia musical y literaria*, Madrid 01/05/1845.

Souvenirs d'Espagne. In Marseilles, he played – according to *La Iberia Musical y Literaria* – a piece called *"Recuerdos de España"*[21]. And in *La France Musicale* of May 18, 1845, we find the following:

> *LYON.- Liszt vient de se faire entendre dans notre ville: et malgré les nombreux départs pour la campagne, la salle était pleine, et le triomphe du grand pianiste complet comme toujours. Le concerto de Weber, les Souvenirs d'Espagne et la Marche de Dom Sébastien, ont été les morceaux le plus à effet.*[22]

Thus, it seems perfectly logical that this *Souvenirs d'Espagne* could actually be the same as the *Fantasía a Capricho* played in Barcelona, or one of the *Caprichos* he played in other Spanish cities or a combination of those pieces. Having reviewed all the appearances of those works in Liszt's Spanish and French programmes, the question which immediately arises is: do any of those *Caprichos* and *Fantasías* match any known work in the Liszt catalogue? As the shared trait of these pieces is that of being based on Spanish themes[23] (whether popular, from folklore, or adapted from works by Spanish composers), the logical step forward would be to search Liszt's catalogue of Spanish compositions for possible connections or matches with those mystery works.

Liszt's Spanish Compositions

Liszt's 'Spanish' catalogue for piano[24] is quite remarkable in terms of the number and quality of the works therein. It includes pieces composed before, during and after his Iberian travels. For our purposes of finding links with the *Caprichos* played in Spain, we can disregard those works composed long after the tour. (This would be the case with the *Rapsodie Espagnole*, which shares the Jota aragonesa theme with those compositions but was completed almost twenty years after he left Iberia, and so is very unlikely to be connected with them.) The same criterion can be applied to the second version of *La Romanesca* S252b, which seems to bear no relationship whatsoever with the pieces in our field of reference.

The works composed by Liszt prior to his trip across Iberia include the first version of *La Romanesca* S252a – which can be disregarded for the same reasons as its sister work – and the *Rondeau fantastique sur un thème espagnol 'El Contrabandista'* S252. We have found no evidence of this last piece being related to the *Caprichos* and *Souvenirs* Liszt played either in Spain and France.

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[21] Ibid. 18/05/1845.

[22] *Liszt has just made himself heard in our town. And despite many having departed for the countryside, it was a full house; and the great pianist's success, as always, complete. The concerto by Weber, the Souvenirs d'Espagne and the Marche de Dome Sébastien were the pieces which garnered the most effect.*

[23] In all the cases but *El Capricho* played in Madrid for which we have, as already mentioned, no hints as to its content.

[24] We will not take into account pieces like the song *Gastibelza* because we are, of course, looking for connections with Liszt's solo piano catalogue

So we have three pieces left[25] which could potentially fit our criteria: the *Grosse Concert-Phantasie über Spanische Weisen* S253, *Feuille Morte – Élégie d'après Soriano* – S428 and the recently discovered *Romancero Espagnol* S695c, all of them written in 1845. Let us begin by taking a closer look at the *Romancero*.

Romancero Espagnol S695c

The *Romancero Espagnol* - as Leslie Howard points out - we know from Liszt's correspondence, was to be published in 1847, with the intention of dedicating it to Queen Isabella II of Spain, but for some reason the publication never came about[26]. The MS. of the piece was very recently discovered, edited and published by Leslie Howard; he has also recorded a wonderful rendering of the piece for Hyperion records, released just a few months ago. Howard's own words[27] on the piece deserve to be quoted in full:

> *From the correspondence we can see that Liszt clearly considered the work complete, although there is one small lacuna and, as often with Liszt until the last moment, the ending is not fully written-out. The pages of the MS are not numbered, and are not bound together. An archivist at the Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv, presumably Peter Raabe, has placed a large question-mark at the top of what is surely the beginning of the work, but has then written 'Spanische Rhapsodie' at the top of the page where the final jota begins (the theme is the same as that in the Rapsodie espagnole, but in a different key, and very differently treated), and has altered the order of the pages, placing this section at the beginning—a musical impossibility, since this section recalls earlier material in the peroration. Careful reshuffling of the pages gives us a piece in three clear sections, each based on a different theme There is an introduction, setting up the dichotomy between the tonalities of E major and C major—this material will be recalled towards the end of the work—then an elaborately varied fandango, largely in C major, but straying as far afield as A flat. The central section is a set of free variations on an imposing, stately theme in E minor, of title unknown, and the finale, based on the Jota aragonesa, takes us to E major with excursions into C major. Earlier themes are recalled and combined, especially in an alarmingly difficult passage in two time-signatures at once.*

So the work is a beautiful tripartite fantasy on three themes, two of them unknown but the third of them being the recurrent *Jota aragonesa*. Obviously, if the work was written – as suggested by Howard – during Liszt's Iberian travels, the third part of this piece could have some connection with the *Capricho sobre el tema de la jota aragonesa* he played in Spain. But what about the unidentified themes treated in sections I and II?

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[25] We are not counting as Spanish the Spanisches Lied on S485 nor the Spanisches Ständchen S487 as they are mere transcriptions of works of Spanish extraction but written by foreign composers (Dessauer and Festetics).

[26] The work was first published in the *Liszt Society Journal* in 2009.

[27] See Howard, Leslie, Booklet for *Liszt new discoveries, Vol. 3*, Hyperion Records, 2011, p.5.

As we have already seen, Francisco Salas' Andalusian song *Los toros del puerto* was used by Liszt in his *Fantasía a Capricho* played in Barcelona. We have been able to locate this song, and a careful comparison with the *Romancero Espagnol* showed (much to our surprise) that Liszt used it as the main source for the first section of the piece. So this first section may also be related to the *Fantasía a capricho* featured in Barcelona. In fact, this *Fantasía* could be an early version of the first part of S695c, probably with a more brilliant and conclusive finale. Interestingly, Liszt quoted *Los toros del Puerto* themes quite literally in the *Romancero*. He even kept them in their original key. We can see the introduction and the first and second themes compared in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

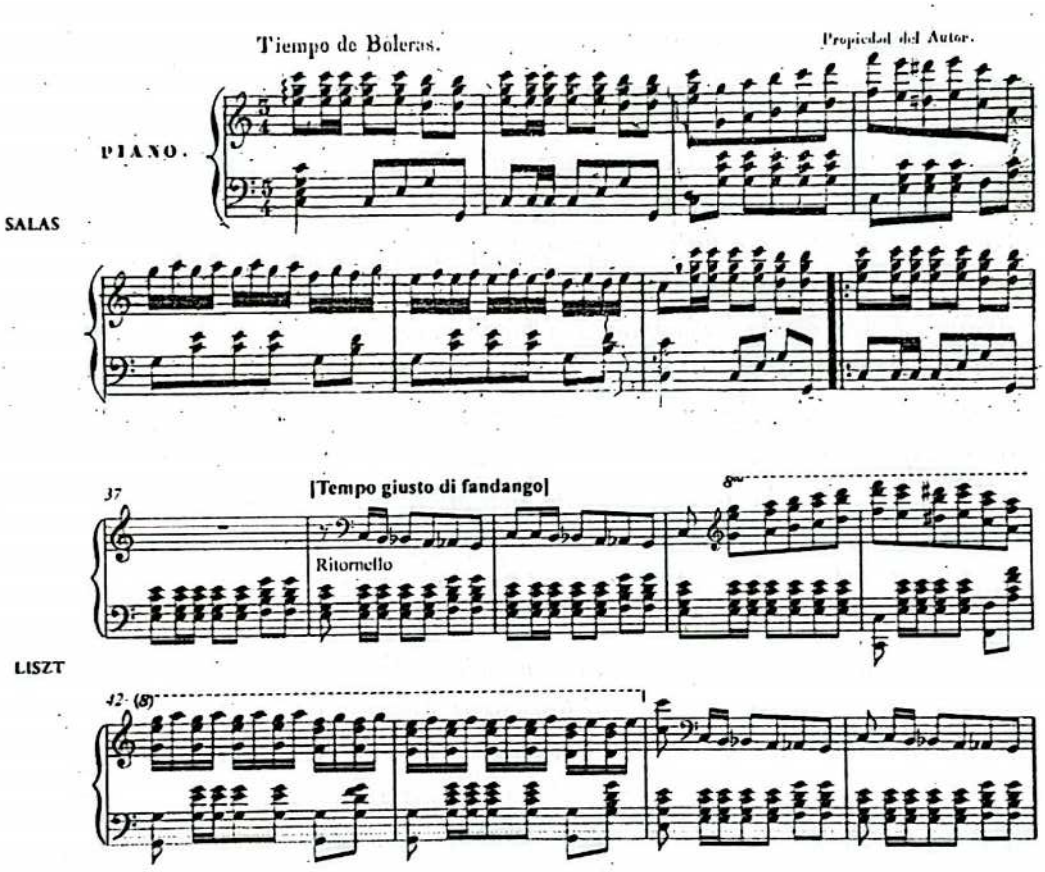


Fig 1. *Los toros del Puerto* (mm.1-8) compared to S695c (mm. 37-45)

The composer of *Los toros del Puerto,* Francisco Salas, was a very well-known baritone in 19th-century Spain and his name turns up very often in the chronicles of the time. He was particularly appreciated not only for his vocal but also for his acting talents. His reputation began in Madrid in 1834 where he played the role of the Dottore Dulcamara in Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*. According to Cambronero[28], Salas was an admirable *caricato* with an exquisite technique and clear, clean vocalisation. His talent for disguise was remarkable

[28] Op. cit., p. 102.

enough to prevent crowds recognising him when he presented himself on stage in a *Don Pasquale* in the Teatro de la Cruz in 1845. Surprisingly, he even played the Agata role (!) in Donizetti's *Le convenienze teatrali* disguised as a woman and singing *falsetto*. He was mainly considered a buffo baritone but his talent allowed him also to tackle serious roles such as the bass part in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. In the Spanish operatic scene, dominated by Italian singers, Salas was one of the few Spaniards whose reputation was on a par with that of his Italian colleagues. In 1848, he was appointed stage manager of the opera company in the Teatro del Circo in Madrid.



Fig. 2. *Los toros del Puerto* (mm.9-18) compared to S695c (mm. 51-60)

Salas also wrote songs from time to time[29], as was the case with *Los toros del puerto* – the most popular piece in Madrid in this genre during the '40s[30]. He was also closely involved in the Zarzuela revival (staunchly supporting Gaztambide's and Barbieri's efforts in field), playing leading roles in many of those productions. He was very active in the musical

[29] Other songs of his include *La aguardentera, La bofetá* or *El cigarrero.*
[30] According to CAMBRONERO, *Op. Cit.*, p. 126.

scene of Madrid in the '50s and '60s during which he sang, organized concerts, taught and even got involved in the building of a new theatre.



Fig. 3. *Los toros del Puerto* (mm.23-28) compared to S695c (mm. 82-86)

Once the themes for the first section of the work were identified, only the materials used for the second section remained a total mystery. Nevertheless, careful and patient research at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, led us to the sources for this part as well. We were able to identify the materials in this second part of the *Romancero Espagnol* as those used by Spanish composer Félix Máximo López as the Theme for his *Variaciones al Minué afandangado*.

Félix Máximo López (1742-1821) was a well-known composer in Madrid in the last decades of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th. He was an organist at the 'Capilla Real', and his extant output includes organ works – mainly liturgical – and vocal pieces, along with some works for keyboard[31] among which we find some sonatas and a few sets of variations. Although Félix Máximo López was a composer of some repute in Spain, he was not nearly as well known abroad. That reinforces the idea that Liszt came to know his *Minué afandangado* in Spain, probably in Madrid, where López had been first organist at the Royal Chapel.

[31] For more information see: ESPINOSA, Alma, *The Keyboard Works of Félix Máximo López*, New York University Ph.D. diss., 1976.



Fig. 4. Portrait of F.M.López by Vicente López Portaña (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

In Figures 5 and 6, we have reproduced both the original theme as used by Félix Máximo López and Liszt's treatment of this same material[32]. Interestingly, the second section of *Romancero Espagnol* is a set of variations. Thus, Liszt established one more parallel with López's own work, also a set of variations. As we can observe in the given excerpts, Liszt quoted the *Minué Afandangado* quite literally, as he also did with *Los toros del Puerto.*

[32] The excerpt of the *Variaciones al Minué afandangado* shown in this article is a snapshot of the Ms. 1742 in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid.



Fig. 5. *Variaciones al minué afandangado* (mm. 1-31)



Fig. 6. *Romancero Espagnol S695c* (mm. 247-270)

Feuille Morte – Élégie d'après Soriano – S428

The origins of *Feuille Morte* S428 have intrigued scholars for decades. It was published around 1845 in Paris[33] but Liszt left no clues behind regarding the provenance of the materials used in the work, beyond the link to Soriano's name. The elegiac tone of the piece made for an odd connection with Soriano's output, mainly cheerful, light-hearted popular songs and zarzuelas. Meditative, mournful material as that used by Liszt in *Feuille Morte* seemed quite distant from the usual mood of Soriano's compositions.

Mariano Soriano Fuertes (1817-1880) was an important character in the Spanish musical scene for most of the 19th century. Son of the well-known composer Indalecio Soriano, he was extremely active in many musical fields. In 1842 he co-founded with Joaquín Espín y Guillén the first musical periodical to be published in Spain, *La Iberia Musical y Literaria.* In the ensuing years we find him working as a pianist, chairing the musical department as well as editing the journal of the Liceo de Córdoba, composing, heading theaters in Cádiz, Sevilla and Barcelona, teaching at the Madrid Conservatory, as well as writing musicological and pedagogical books. A pioneer in Spain in the field of musicology, the renewal and revival of the Zarzuela genre also owes much to his efforts as a leading composer: his tonadilla *Jeroma la castañera* is one of the earliest examples of the renewal of the 'género chico' in Spain.

As stated above, Soriano chaired the music department at Córdoba's Liceo Artístico y Literario. These *Liceos* were a type of culture club where the bourgeoisie socialized. In most of the cities in Spain in which Liszt played – as in Madrid, Córdoba, Cádiz, Málaga and Barcelona – he was received by members of the said *Liceos*. So in Córdoba, Soriano was to welcome Liszt when he arrived in the city. A careful study of the periodicals of 1844-45 show that the enthusiasm Liszt engendered in this capital was far superior to other Iberian cities. In Liszt's own words on how he was received in Córdoba[34]:

> *La fait est qu'après cela il ne me reste plus qu'à me planter en personne sur quelque place publique en guise de Statue comme Rossini proposait de le faire au foyer de l'opéra!*[35]

Our suspicion is that Mariano Soriano had much to do with this enthusiasm and that he quite actively worked the crowd prior to Liszt's arrival in Córdoba[36]. Whether for this reason or not, Liszt and Soriano seemed to have developed a certain collaboration during his stay.

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33 With a misspelled double 'r' in Soriano's name on the title.

34 Letter to Graf Ödön Zichy (Sevilla, December 17, 1844), *Franz Liszt Briefe aus ungarische Sammlungen 1835-1886*, Bärenreiter, Budapest, 1966, p.54.

35 *The fact is, all that remains for me to do after that, is to appear in person in some public space and pretend to be a statue, like Rossini intended to do in the foyer of the opera house!*

36 See his remarks in the journal *Liceo de Córdoba*, 28/11 and 4/12/1844, pp.5 and 4 respectively.



Fig. 7 Mariano Soriano Fuertes by the time he met Liszt in Córdoba[37]

The fact that *Feuille Morte* – a piece written in ¾ time and bearing Soriano's name – was published around 1845 and that Liszt improvised a *Fantasía sobre un Vals del Sr. Soriano* in his only concert in Córdoba led to the suspicion that these two situations could be somehow connected and prompted us to search for a Soriano piece in ¾ time– probably a vals – written before 1845 and with an elegiac, mournful character. This last feature excluded a great deal of Soriano's output as most of his compositions, as already mentioned, had a popular bias and tended to be cheerful in character (Soriano's zarzuelas, tonadillas and Spanish songs were probably not the place to look for our piece). After a long search through many Spanish libraries and archives we located an undated piece by Soriano entitled *Wals fúnebre / para piano forte / a la muerte del célebre M. Bellini / compuesto por el joven Mariano Soriano Fuertes,* at the Biblioteca Musical del Ayuntamiento de Madrid. So now, we had a piece in tempo di vals, written in memory of Vincenzo Bellini and, therefore, of elegiac character. The dedication dates it after 1835, but not too long after as Soriano is described as 'young' on the title page. Upon seeing the score it became clear that what we had here was indeed the source for *Feuille Morte*.

In Figs. 8, 9, and 10 we compare two of the three subjects and the refrain in Liszt's work with the materials from the *Vals* by Soriano that inspired them. As the reader will note, the case with Feuille Morte is quite different from the *Romancero Espagnol*. If the latter is a Paraphrase on three clear themes which Liszt quoted literally and then reworked and varied throughout the piece, *Feuille Morte* is a free Fantasy which bears a more general

[37] Litography from *Revista médica.* Source: Biblioteca Nacional de España.

resemblance with the piece which inspired it. The themes from the Soriano *Vals Fúnebre* are not quoted literally but in a free style which nevertheless respects some of the characteristics of the original. All in all, Liszt managed to turn what was only a clumsy, insignificant bagatelle into quite a thrilling piece. It is also interesting to note that the genesis of *Feuille Morte* compared with the *Romancero Espagnol* seems to be quite different as well. S429 probably had its origin in Liszt's improvisation in Córdoba, subsequently reworked and written out; whereas the *Romancero* appeared in Liszt's concert programs (in the form of a *Fantasía a Capricho*) already as a written-out composition, leading us to think that it was probably not the consequence of an improvisation.



Fig. 8. *Vals Funébre* (Soriano) (mm.1-11) compared to S428 (mm. 7-19)

In Fig. 8 we can see a comparison of the first subject of both Soriano's *Vals* and *Feuille Morte*. The time signature, key, and overall melodic shape of the original are maintained but Liszt reworked some harmonies, noticeably improving the original.

Fig. 9 shows a comparison between the second subject of Soriano's *Vals* and the recurrent refrain we find in *Feuille Morte*. As we can see, Liszt concentrated on the material found in the penultimate bar of the *Vals'* second section, turning it into a sort of insistent distress call, to great effect.



Fig. 9. *Vals Funébre* (Soriano) (mm. 17-24) compared to S428 (mm. 25-35)

The second theme in *Feuille Morte* only shares its key with the third one in Soriano's *Vals*. Nevertheless, Liszt added a third theme which bears a clear resemblance in its melodic shape with its parallel in the *Vals* and its genuine Italian flavor (fig. 10).



Fig. 10. *Vals Funébre* (Soriano) (mm. 18-32) compared to S428 (mm. 63-73)

Grosse Concert-Phantasie über spanische Weisen S253

The *Grosse Concert-Phantasie über spanische Weisen* has commonly been considered the only work based upon Spanish themes that Liszt composed while in the Peninsula[38]. Leslie Howard's research and the facts presented in this short article lead us to add at least two more pieces to the list: S695c and S428. The sources for the *Grosse Phantasie* have already been identified in previous studies by Stevenson, Howard or Parakilas. An analysis of the work reveals a structure based on six thematically distinct sections:

[38] According to Leslie Howard, the Ms. is dated 'Lisbonne, 2 Février, [18]45'. See Howard, Leslie, Booklet for *Rapsodie Espagnola and another pieces on Spanish themes, The complete music for solo piano Vol. 45*, Hyperion Records, 1997, p.2.

Section I (bars 1-89): Introduction. A fandango is used as thematic source.

Section II (bars 90-187): Based on the last theme of the *Jota Aragonesa* (the 'Abgesang', as Stevenson names it) which later appeared also in the *Rapsodie Espagnole*.

Section III (bars 188-248): The first theme of the song *La Cachucha* (which belongs to its instrumental introduction) is used.

Section IV (bars 249-333): Beginning with a fugato, it makes extensive use of the fandango again.

Section V (bars 334-480): This long section begins with a literal quotation of the two initial themes of *La Cachucha.* Both the instrumental introduction and the first vocal theme of the piece are stated in their entirety. The remaining part of this section is a paraphrase on these two themes.

Section VI –Coda– (bars 481-625): Marked Più animato, quasi presto, combines the *Jota* theme on section II and the two themes of *La Cachucha* to produce a spectacular close to the piece.

But, if the themes for S253 have already been identified, what remains to be clarified is their provenance. We believe this question to be a bit more intricate than generally thought. As discussed at the beginning of this article, the common view on S253 is that, even if it was indeed written in Iberia, Liszt made use of stereotypes to compose it and not of actual themes he collected as he travelled across the Peninsula. In the words of James Parakilas in his essay "How Spain got a soul"[39]:

> *The themes he used in this work all come from the international repertory of the "Spanish": the Figaro Fandango, the jota aragonesa that Glinka also used, and the cachucha. Whatever attention he paid to Spanish folk music showed in improvisations he did for his hosts rather than in any written composition comparable to Glinka's Second Spanish Overture.*

The remaining scholars who have commented upon the piece elaborate on the same theory as Parakilas. In our humble opinion, however, whether the themes used in S253 were international clichés of the "Spanish" or not, remains for now an open question which is in need of revision and further research.

The fandango in the introduction of S253 has always been identified with that appearing in the third act of *Le nozze di Figaro* and in number XX of the *Don Juan* ballet by Gluck[40]. We have no conclusive arguments to refute this assertion yet cannot help feeling that it is perfectly possible for this fandango – Mozart's and Gluck's are definitely the same – to be

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[39] Parakilas, James, *How Spain Got a Soul,* chapter in *The Exotic in Western Music* (ed. Jonathan Bellman), Northeastern University Press, Boston, 1998, p.158.

[40] See, for example Stevenson, Robert, *op.cit,* p.511.

a different example from Liszt's own. They bear a certain resemblance to one another[41], to be sure, but are nonetheless quite different (see both examples compared in Fig. 11). It could also be said that both "fandangos" are simply the result of reworking the same well-known European stereotype. While this could certainly be the case, every "real" fandango in Spain was also composed following that very same stereotype. Besides, the genre was so tremendously popular in the Peninsula during the 19th century that Liszt surely must have listened to quite a few street versions during his tour. This is confirmed by his own words in a letter to princess Belgiojoso written a month before he completed the *Grosse Concert-Phantasie* in Lisbon[42]:

> *A Madrid sur le théâtre et dans les vals, vous trouvez des bandes d'aveugles qui vous exécutent les fandangos, boléros et jotas, dons les modulations vous causent des ébouriffements sans pareil!*[43]

This proves Liszt heard some "real" Spanish fandangos in the Peninsula before he wrote S253. Whether the fandango he used was or was not one of these, remains an open question.



Fig. 11. The *fandango* in *Le nozze di Figaro* (in Cramer's piano transcription) compared to the one in the *Grosse Concert-Phantaise über spanische Weisen* (mm. 1-7).

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[41] A resemblance born also to some extent to those by Soler or Boccherini.

[42] *Autour de Mme. d'Agoult et de Liszt*, Graset, Paris, 1941, p.186. (letter written from Cádiz on January 6, 1845).

[43] *In Madrid, at the theatre and in the valleys there are bands of blind people playing fandangos, boleros and jotas, with modulations that will amaze you without equal!*

The same holds true for the *Jota Aragonesa* theme Liszt used in S253 and S695c. The jota was – as were the bolero and the fandango – very popular in Spain in those years and flourished in a great variety of regional and local examples. But the *Jota Aragonesa* used by Liszt was a widely known stereotype throughout Spain. Whether Liszt came to know it in the Peninsula or beforehand is also an issue in need of further research. Glinka, who came to Spain a few months after Liszt, apparently knew nothing about the *Jota Aragonesa* until he got to hear it in Valladolid[44]. This could have been also the case with Liszt.

In addition, there is a possible relationship between S253 and Liszt's concert activities in Spain as the *Capricho on the Spanish Jota aragonesa* that he played in Cádiz and Córdoba, is probably connected with the second and sixth sections of the *Grosse Concert-Phantasie* and/or the third section of the *Romancero Espagnol* discussed above. Again, it is only logical to think that if that were the case, the material may have been treated in a longer and more elaborated fashion.

And, finally, we have *La Cachucha* as the third source for S253. This theme also poses some complex questions. *La Cachucha* was a very popular song in Cádiz at the beginning of the 19th century. Apparently it was sung by the 'realistas' – supporters of King Fernando VII – with political lyrics supporting their cause[45]. Its fame subsequently spread all over the country, sometimes set to different words. The dance associated with it also became a great hit in Spain, to the point of giving name to a genre itself, transferring from street to stage and cultivated by the 'escuela bolera'.



Fig.12 Fanny Elssler as featured in *Une vie de danseuse : Fanny Elssler,* Plon-Nourrit, Paris, 1909.

Therefore it was as a dance genre that it became well known in Paris in 1836 when Fanny Elssler (see fig. 12) danced it in the ballet *Le diable boiteux*[46]. The cachucha danced by

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[44] See Brown, David, *Mikhail Glinka,* Oxford University press, London, 1974, pp. 246, 309. Cited in Stevenson, *Op. Cit.*, p. 3.

[45] Gella Iturriaga, José: *Cancionero de la Guerra de la Independencia* in *Guerra de la Independencia : estudios,* Tomo II, Institución Fernando el Católico, 1964, pp. 371-404.

[46] Those interested in the story of the success of *Le diable boiteux,* please refer to Ehrhard, Auguste, *Une vie de danseuse : Fanny Elssler,* Plon-Nourrit, Paris, 1909. Chapter VII, pp. 220-261.

Elssler became an instant success and from this moment its popularity as a dance spread quickly all over Europe. But was the music to which Elssler danced the very same as that of the song which gave name to the genre? According to Parakilas[47], the answer is yes:

> *Unlike the even more popular Bolero, for which any number of different musical works were composed, the cachucha was danced, apparently, to the single song from which it took his name.*

Liszt scholars have hitherto always made this assumption. If that were the case, the conclusion they have drawn from it is perfectly logical: that Liszt got acquainted with the music of *La Cachucha* before he visited the Peninsula and did not collect it during his travels. However, if we are to believe scholars like Suárez-Pajares and Arredondo Calderón[48], the *cachucha* was a song genre and not a single song. They described its characteristics thus:

> *La cachucha es . . . una canción determinada consistente en introducción, coplas, un estribillo característico y una pequeña coda instrumental. . . es un obra . . . escrita en compás de 3/8, con un movimiento rítmico elegante y en tonalidad mayor. El rango melódico de la parte vocal cubre sólo una sexta menor con unos giros cromáticos en la parte de las coplas muy característicos en las versiones escritas que, sin embargo, se evitan en las versiones tradicionales. Tanto la melodía de las coplas como la del estribillo acaban en el tercer grado.*[49]

They even referred to a melodic example of cachucha – which does not match the song used by Liszt – and offered a set of rhythmic patterns common to the genre (see fig. 13).



Fig. 13. A cachucha melody and the rhythmic pattern characteristic of the genre.

Our recent research, however, without contradicting these assertions, tends to confirm Parakilas *et al.* in the sense that the original melodic line of *La Cachucha* was probably the

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47 *Op. cit.*, p. 149.

48 See "Cachucha" in the *Diccionario de la música española e iberoamericana, vol. 2*, SGAE, 1999, pp. 856-857.

49 *The cachucha is . . . a song consisting of an introduction, coplas, a characteristic refrain and a little instrumental coda. [It is] . . . written in a 3/8 time signature, with an elegant, rhythmic movement in a major key. The melodic range of the vocal part is restricted to a minor sixth with very characteristic chromatic turns in the coplas in the written versions, which are, however, not included in the traditional versions. Both the melody of the coplas and the refrain end on the mediant.*

one everyone quoted in Spain and abroad. The *cachuchas* from the first half of the 19th century, that we found at the Biblioteca Nacional de España in Madrid are, in fact, all quite similar to the original. Another piece which confirms this is the *Caprice sur l'Air Espagnol La Cachucha pour la guitare* by the French guitarist Napoléon Coste, published in Paris, which quotes the original song quite literally. All the stated facts seem, in our opinion, to confirm the suspicion that Liszt could have been acquainted with the original melody of *La Cachucha* before travelling to Spain (see. figs. 14 and 15). Still, at the moment no definitive conclusion can be drawn and further research is needed on this matter.



Fig. 14. *La Cachucha* (mm. 1-4) compared to S253 (mm. 188-193).



Fig.15. *La Cachucha* (mm. 20-27) compared to S253 (mm. 188-193)

Final remarks

Identifying the provenance of the material used for *Romancero Espagnol*, *Feuille Morte* and the *Grosse Concert-Phantasie über spanische Weisen* would not be of great interest in itself, should it not at the same time yield further information on Liszt's touring and compositional habits.

As mentioned above, the recent discovery by Leslie Howard (S695c) and the facts expounded on in this article, allow us to add two more works to the list of pieces Liszt composed while in the Peninsula. This would already make for a collection of five pieces, among them two long piano paraphrases. But there is still more. If we are to believe Chailley, Liszt was also working on *Les Quatre Éléments* as he toured the Iberian Peninsula[50]:

> *C'est au cours de sa tournée ibérique que Liszt recevra d'Autran les trois poèmes qui, avec Les Aquilons, complèteront Les Quatre Éléments. Il les mettra aussitôt en musique. La Terre, commencée à Malaga, sera achevée à Lisbonne en avril 45, Les flots à Valence le jour du Pâques. Quant aux Astres, commencés en cours de voyage, ils semblent avoir été terminés en mai 45 à Marseille même, cloturant ainsi le cycle dans la ville qui en avait vu la naissance.*[51]

These assertions are in need of revision as they contain some evidently false statements: Liszt went to Málaga after and not before Lisbon, where he definitely was not in April '45. Despite those ambiguities, however, if Liszt composed those three pieces while in Iberia and we add them to the five works already mentioned, it would then amount to a remarkable number for a six-month work period. This would refute the idea that his creative forces were not at their best while in the Peninsula.

In addition, the assumption that Liszt's Spanish fantasies where based on European clichés of the 'Spanish' can be somewhat dismissed. Spanish music and dance were quite the rage in Paris during the '30s and '40s. Some Spanish musicians, such as the great singer Manuel García or the guitarists Sor and Aguado, had in previous decades already popularized local airs such as the *polo*, the *fandango* and the *bolero*. Liszt was of course probably acquainted with most of these stereotypes. In fact, before travelling to Spain, he had already written a *bolero* – the song *Gastibelza* on a poem by Victor Hugo. But, as we have already seen,

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[50] Chailly, Jaques, *Documents relatives aux préludes de Liszt*, in *Actes du colloque international Franz Liszt*, La revue musicale, Paris, 1986, p. 313.

[51] *During his Iberian tour, Liszt received from Autran the three poems that, with "Les Aquilons", would complete "Les Quatre Éléments." He set them to music immediately. "La Terre" was begun in Málaga and completed in Lisbon on April, '45, "Les flots" [was completed] in Valencia on Easter. As to "Astres", it was begun en route, and seemed to have been completed in May '45 in Marseille proper, thus closing the cycle in the very city which had seen their birth.*

most of the Spanish themes Liszt used in the fantasies written in Iberia were not mere stereotypes but concrete examples taken from art (López and Soriano), popular (as *Los toros del Puerto*), and folk Spanish music (as the *Jota Aragonesa*). This holds true for the *Romancero Espagnol* and *Feuille Morte*, but the facts suggest that perhaps it could also extend to the *Grosse Concert-Phantasie*[52].

We also venture the thought that *Feuille Morte* might give us a good idea of what Liszt's improvisations could have sounded like. As already stated, it is very likely the written-down version of an improvisation on Soriano's *Vals* Liszt played in his only recital in Córdoba.

Having weighed all the stated facts, there emerges a very flexible and accommodating portrayal of the virtuoso as he toured across Iberia. We know that the dates and routes of his travels changed frequently. Evidently he quickly adapted to the audiences' requirements, as did his compositions, uncannily tapping into the very core of Iberia's musical tastes and trends – and thus affording us a glimpse into Liszt's musical reactions derived from his exposure to Iberian exoticism.

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[52] Only in the case of the *folia* theme that Liszt used in his Rapsodie Espagnole can we be sure he did not collect it in the Peninsula. See Liszt's letter to Felix von Lichnowsky written about September 1, 1845, in *Bayreuther Blätter deutsche Zeitschrift im Geiste Richard Wagners,* xxx/1-3 (1907), 35: "vous savez que c'est le titre [folies d'Espagne] d'une chanson tout connue à l'étranger, mais que je n'ai jamais entendu en Espagne". Cited in Stevenson, *op.cit.*, p. 3.