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Transatlantic Opera in Spain and the New World in the 17th and Early 18th Centuries

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Abstract

Opera was performed in the Spanish-speaking New World colonies almost a century before what later would become the United States. The first operas staged in the Spanish colonies were wildly elaborate projects funded by the viceroys—Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco’s *La púrpura de la rosa*, in Lima, Peru, in 1701, and Manuel Zumaya’s *Parténope*, in Mexico City in 1711. These were followed by two operas written to convey religious didactic messages in the remote Jesuit Missions of South America: Domenico Zipoli’s *San Ignacio* (ca. 1720) and the anonymous *San Xavier* (ca. 1730), the latter of which was composed in the indigenous Bolivian Chiquitano language with a parallel Spanish *libretto*. All derived from the Italian opera tradition but were decisively shaped by Spanish musical theater, and they were indebted to the first operas in Madrid, which predated them: Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio’s fully sung *La selva sin amor*, from 1627, performed by the Florentine delegation, and a pair of operas from 1659 and 1660 by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *La púrpura de la rosa* (whose libretto served as the basis for Torrejón’s 1701 version) and *Celos aun del aire matan*. These early Spanish operas were part of a process of political and ideological posturing since they were funded and produced either by nobility intent on displaying their wealth, prestige, and power, or by leaders of the Church who were seeking to impart a particular religious message to embolden its influence. These grand spectacles did not usher in a stunning opera tradition in Spain, any more than their progeny in the New World would. For a variety of financial, political, and cultural reasons, a sustained or successful opera tradition would not occur until the second half of the 19th century in Spain or the New World. Perhaps importantly, these productions reflected the movement of goods and people from the Old World to the New, and opera played an exceptional role in shaping political and social events in the metropolitan centers and in minority peripheries in both Spain and the New World.

Keywords

early opera, music for indoctrination, lyrical theater, zarzuela, comedia, Calderón de la Barca, Lope de Vega, Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco, Domenico Zipoli, Manuel Zumaya

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Comments

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Summary

Opera was performed in the Spanish-speaking New World colonies almost a century before what later would become the United States. The first operas staged in the Spanish colonies were wildly elaborate projects funded by the viceroys—Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco’s La púrpura de la rosa, in Lima, Peru, in 1701, and Manuel Zumaya’s Parténope, in Mexico City in 1711. These were followed by two operas written to convey religious didactic messages in the remote Jesuit Missions of South America: Domenico Zipoli’s San Ignacio (ca. 1720) and the anonymous San Xavier (ca. 1730), the latter of which was composed in the indigenous Bolivian Chiquitano language with a parallel Spanish libretto. All derived from the Italian opera tradition but were decisively shaped by Spanish musical theater, and they were indebted to the first operas in Madrid, which predated them: Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio’s fully sung La selva sin amor, from 1627, performed by the Florentine delegation, and a pair of operas from 1659 and 1660 by Pedro Calderón de la Barca, La púrpura de la rosa (whose libretto served as the basis for Torrejón’s 1701 version) and Celos aun del aire matan. These early Spanish operas were part of a process of political and ideological posturing since they were funded and produced either by nobility intent on displaying their wealth, prestige, and power, or by leaders of the Church who were seeking to impart a particular religious message to embolden its influence. These grand spectacles did not usher in a stunning opera tradition in Spain, any more than their progeny in the New World would. For a variety of financial, political, and cultural reasons, a sustained or successful opera tradition would not occur until the second half of the 19th century in Spain or the New World. Perhaps importantly, these productions reflected the movement of goods and people from the Old World to the New, and opera played an exceptional role in shaping political and social events in the metropolitan centers and in minority peripheries in both Spain and the New World.

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Context

As originally conceived by the Florentines, opera was a dramatic genre that combined light music with sung poetic verse. In fact, in the 17th century, the French composer Jean-Baptiste Lully called the genre “tragédie en musique,” denoting the primacy of the poetry and tragedy over the music. Opera’s dramatic centrality changed under Claudio Monteverdi, who believed that opera could only reach its full potential when music fully integrated dramatic action, song, and spectacular scenery and costumes.
After Monteverdi, opera was regularly conceived in the same way: a librettist created the dramatic poetic text, which was set to music by the composer and staged by a designer, who integrated costumes, mechanizations, and other special effects to transform the stage into new and glamorous worlds. Later, in the 18th century, grand orchestras and singers transfixed audiences, partly displacing the text or song.

In early modern Spain, playwrights viewed totally sung musical drama as a unique advent; from the earliest semi-operas and zarzuelas, music and drama were entwined and would remain so in Spain and the Americas during the colonial period. It would take the daring and ingenious Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca to introduce opera in Spain, the former by writing a Florentine-style opera, La selva sin amor, and the latter by initiating a Spanish genre based on an amalgamation of previous Italian and Spanish models, in his Celos aun del aire matan and La purpura de la rosa. These attempts were not without their detractors or defects, and Spanish opera would not reach its maturity until the first decades of the 18th century. At that time, thanks to royal patronage, several Italian schools of opera developed out of coalesced forms from Naples, emerged in Madrid, and from there it would then be transported to Spain’s colonies in the New World.

New World operas progressed along two main lines: those staged in metropolitan centers, such as Lima, reflected secular European palatial and court tastes; whereas in the Jesuit missions of the Andean region of South America, operas were decidedly more sacred and featured indigenous musicians, singers, and composers. The earliest and most important profane opera from an urban center is Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco’s version of Calderón’s La purpura de la rosa, staged in Lima, Peru. It marked opera’s entrance into the New World. Subsequent operas in Lima were inspired by earlier Spanish models and depended on Italian and French lyrical-dramatic trends. In the remote areas outside Lima and other metropolitan cities in South America, opera was unquestionably more sacrosanct. Between 1720 and 1740, Jesuit missionaries produced several short operas that had either been written in one of the main cities and distributed to the missions or composed by European missionaries living in the indigenous villages. The first, Domenico Zipoli’s San Ignacio de Loyola, was composed in Córdoba, Argentina, and copies were circulated through several missions. The second, San Francisco Xavier, was written in the local native language by an unknown Indian composer. The two indigenous operas are extremely important to our understanding of cross-cultural collaboration because through the intercession of music and dance, Europeans and the indigenous worked together to introduce spectacular musical pieces that extolled the virtues of the faith. Regardless of where, why, or how early American opera came about, the genre adapted both secular and sacred European styles; at the same time, it drew on relevant and contemporaneous theatrical and musical traditions from pre-Colombian drama.

**Opera and Drama**

Well before opera was established in early modern Europe, drama was the preferred form of stage entertainment in both popular venues and private palaces. Spanish playwrights viewed the stage as a powerful and influential force, but their plotlines had to cater to popular interest: captivating storylines, exciting plot turns, and strong characters backed by advanced mechanizations that would transform well-known historical or mythological tales into grand spectacles. For these reasons, Spanish drama—called the *comedia nueva*—was the single most popular form of mass entertainment throughout the 17th century. Most *comedia* productions had a run of only a few days to a few weeks, requiring *comediantes* to continually churn out new plays. The constant cycle of renewal called on dramatists to draw on every tool in their arsenals to overcome theatrical and thematic limitations or risk the wrath of theatergoers, who quite literally might throw things at the actors. Music came to be one of these
innovations, and playwrights began to integrate instrumental pieces as well as short, catchy tunes drawn from poetic ballads (romances), popular stories, and legends. Playwrights eventually experimented with longer pieces, or they implemented full songs and dances between the acts.

Spanish opera therefore emerged from the comedia—and then competed against it. However, while opera took hold across Europe—particularly in Italy—the comedia was a force unto itself in both Spain and its New World colonies. Kings Philip III and Philip IV brought many Italian musicians and singers to their 17th-century courts, but for a variety of reasons, they did not import Italian opera. The challenges were many: only Madrid had the venues, sizeable audiences, and patrimony for large-scale productions; most operas were performed in Italian or in dialect, or both, and audiences were simply not accustomed to fully sung theatrical works. The comedia thus had little to fear from early opera, and it continued to be the most successful form of popular entertainment throughout the century.

**Early Opera in Spain**

Drama before Lope de Vega featured a variety of instruments and song types as background music, but music itself did not drive the play. Lope took the integration of music to a whole new level. In his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo*, a treatise in verse on how to write a good play, he poignantly states that music is important and necessary to good drama: “any poetic imitation / is comprised of three things which are dialogue, / sweet and harmonious poetry, and music.”³ Lope made music more central, incorporating a variety of instruments; a changing number of musicians; and pieces that drew on everyday experience, such as popular sayings and expressions, well-known regional songs, refrains, and verses from his own poetry. Most theatrical troupes already employed musicians and singers—actors who doubled as musicians and singers—so integrating more music was natural. For Lope and other dramatists, the staging of musical genres such as entremeses cantados, jácaras, mojigangas, and bailes offered not only popular entertainment but also a degree of verisimilitude.⁴

In 1627, Lope wrote the libretto for *La selva sin amor*, a one-act opera produced by the famed Florentine stage designer Cosimo Lotti (1571–1643). Filippo Piccinini (1575–1648) added the music with the capable aid of the Tuscan resident secretary Bernardo Monanni. Other members of the Florentine delegation also participated in the Madrid production, including Esau del Borgo, the royal chamberlain to Tuscan ambassador Averardo de’ Medici, who contracted with the musicians and singer. This strong intervention by Italians on native Spanish soil was probably the only way early opera in Spain could have happened. The opera featured Italian meter, with lines of eleven- and seven-syllable silvas sung completely in Italian recitative—partially sung dialogue that adapts to the rhythms of natural speech—that was a central constituent of Italian opera. Lope called his play an égloga pastoral, associating it with the Italian pastoral poetry tradition.

*La selva sin amor* was basically a Florentine-styled opera with a Spanish libretto, performed in Madrid, and it was the first opera in Spain in any language. In the publication of the libretto two years later, Lope acknowledged the work’s novelty and declared it “a new thing in Spain” because “it was performed in song.”⁵ Nothing in the historical record indicates whether anyone, including Lope, was conversant with Italian opera prior to the Florentine delegation’s stay in Madrid, and the dramatist seems to suggest that the genre was not only new to Spain but likely new to him. In the libretto, Lope provided helpful details regarding the centrality of the music: “The instruments occupy the first part of the theater, without their being seen, to whose harmony the characters sing the verses, making at once in the same musical composition wonders, complaints, anger and other affects.”⁶ He clearly understood the significance of what he was doing. Lope likewise emphasized how different song parts in solos, duets, trios overwhelmed the senses: “the beauty of the composition made the ears surrender to the eyes.”⁷ Lotti’s staging included ships in harbors, a lighthouse against a cityscape and advanced
mechanizations such as fish swimming against a moving sea. Lope viewed his role as insignificant alongside the production’s visual splendor: “the thing of least importance in it was my poetry.”

The next significant Spanish experiment with lyrical drama was done by Calderón de la Barca, the greatest playwright of his day. By 1652 Calderón was a priest who enjoyed ample royal patronage that allowed him to write exclusively for court festivities and the opportunity to experiment with a variety of genres such as the zarzuela, a one- or two-act piece with burlesque or satirical plots and comedic characters whose parts alternated between speaking and singing. The zarzuela regularly integrated Italian-style recitative, and Calderón was the genre’s chief architect. Louise Stein defined the zarzuela as “a shorter, lighter court entertainment with a stronger admixture of comedy, and a pastoral or mythological-pastoral plot that unfolds in an earth-bound pastoral or rustic setting.” Calderón mixed components of Italian opera with traditional Spanish polyphony and intensified the pairing of music and vocals until the zarzuela was almost entirely sung, making it a precursor to opera in Spain, or what Stein called “semi operas.”

Productions on the small stage at King Philip IV’s hunting lodge, La Zarzuela, lent the genre its name. These were performed for members of the court, many of whom likely attended operas in Spain’s territories in Milan and Naples or when visiting the Vatican. The first work to formally carry the zarzuela label was Calderón’s El laurel de Apolo: Zarzuela en dos jornadas, in 1657, followed a year later by his El golfo de las sirenas. However, as early as 1652, in La fiera, el rayo y la Piedra, and in 1653, in Fortunas de Andrómeda y Perseo, Calderón was integrating a substantial amount of Italian recitative, pushing the boundaries toward opera. Little by little, many of the zarzuelas dropped sung dialogue in favor of outright singing, making the zarzuela Spain’s own style of lyrical drama. Indeed, the zarzuela was adapted over time, and survived well into the 20th century in another form.

In 1659, Calderón wrote two fully sung lyrical dramas—true operas. The first, La púrpura de la rosa, commemorated the marriage of Spain’s princess María Teresa to France’s King Louis XIV, which also sealed the Peace of the Pyrenees and ended years of warfare between the two countries. Juan Hidalgo, a respected harpist and musician of the royal chapel, likely composed the musical score while Calderón wrote the libretto. La púrpura de la rosa was slated to be performed in La Zarzuela, which suggests that Calderón initially conceived the work as a zarzuela to be directed at the court. The production was instead moved to a large stage at the Coliseo del Buen Retiro, opened to the public, and its production schedule accelerated. This may have been to bolster public support for the peace treaty and pending marriage, as well as to stage an opera before the rival French, whose plans called for an opera performance later in the year. La púrpura was ultimately staged on January 17, 1660, months after the initial peace agreement of 1659 and well before the marriage in June 1660.

The second opera opened on December 5, 1660, also on the Retiro stage: Celos aun del aire matan was another Calderón-Hidalgo collaboration that had three acts featuring choruses of men, nymphs, and shepherds, sometimes in solos alternating with four-part choruses. It featured recitative, arias, and polyphonic choruses similar to Italian opera seria. Celos is considered to be the earliest extant Spanish opera manuscript because it contains both the libretto and musical score, whereas only the libretto for La púrpura exists. Both productions were very elaborate; no expense was spared to celebrate the marriage and the peace, and they were well attended (if only because they followed the expiration of a royal dictate that had closed the theaters for the previous two years).

If the Spanish court was accustomed to intensive musical works through the zarzuela, general audiences clearly were not. Calderón was undertaking a grand experiment, so he highlighted the work’s innovative elements to discourage audience discontent. In the loa, or overture, that introduces the main opera, Vulgo, the character said to represent audience opinion, notes that the work will be fully sung: “It has to be / in music in order to / introduce this style.” This can be read as introducing opera to an unsuspecting group of common theatergoers, but also perhaps as introducing the genre in Spain. Regular audiences, comfortable with the comedia, would probably have been somewhat displeased to
find that they were attending a lyrical work, but Calderón foresaw that disappointment: “Can’t you see how much / Spanish anger you risk / by making them suffer a sung / comedy?” And the playwright was adept at controlling public opinion. He downplays the novelty by declaring it a short, entertaining lyrical work: “It will only be / a small presentation (...).” Calderón employed a similar defense years earlier in *El laurel de Apolo*, stating that “It is not a comedy but rather / a short fable / that is sung and acted / in imitation of Italy.” Unlike the French, whose first operas were sung in Italian, Calderón wrote his entire in Spanish and used traditional Spanish instruments, separating Spanish opera from both Italian and French models.

La púrpura was more advanced musically than any other Spanish lyrical drama to date, including Lope’s *La selva sin amor*. Calderón knowingly incorporated new musical devices common to 17th-century opera together into one theatrical work for the first time: recitative, arias, choruses (in duos or trios), and dances alongside incredible stage mechanizations, backdrops, and costumes. Recitative is arguably the most important among these. The two operas from 1659 and 1660 are Calderón’s only absolute attempts at writing opera, but their arguable success suggests that opera was more fully developed in Spain than in its rival countries, France and England. Other subsequent lyrical dramas picked up the zarzuela tradition where Calderón had left it in 1658.

A few companies began using the term “opera” in 1698 as “fiesta de opera” (as opposed to zarzuela or representación música), but the pieces were still essentially zarzuelas. This changed under Philip V (1683–1724) as the crown imported and subsidized Italian singers, composers, scenery designers, painters, and costume makers. Despite the advantages opera had under Philip V, it would not take hold in Spain as it did in other European countries until much later, although significant experiments were taking place across the Atlantic during this time.

**Early Opera in the New World**

Fully sung lyrical drama in the New World existed prior to the Spanish arrival. Examples include the Guatemala’s anonymous *Rabinal Achi* and Ecuador’s *Diúñ-Diún*, both of which were set to music and danced. These musical dramas may have been isolated examples, but this is uncertain since many indigenous musical works were lost, intentionally destroyed, or absorbed into European styles. In the urban centers of Lima and Mexico City, the crown’s political, economic, and artistic hubs, comedias with musical accompaniment often were presented in public plazas, churches, and on the street, but more fully developed lyrical theater was nonexistent until the beginning of the 18th century, when a few unusual exceptions were staged only in private palaces.

Progress toward fully sung drama started in Lima in 1670 when the Lima-born musician and composer José Díaz set Calderón’s *El gran teatro del Mundo* to music. This was followed in 1672 by a “breve coloquio en recitativo musical” by seven local choir boys in honor of the transfer of the cross from one church to another. The reference to recitative is of particular interest since it may denote acknowledgment of opera. Also presented in 1672 was a lyrical drama, *El arca de Noé*, likely written by Peruvians Antonio Martínez de Meneses, Pedro Rosete Niño, and Jerónimo de Cáncer. This play featured artificial lighting, flashy costumes, advanced stage machinery, and other special effects that point to an ample production budget. Moreover, it was presented in “música recitativa” thereby making it one of the first totally recitative works in the Americas and no doubt a precursor to opera. The Peruvian viceroy, Pedro Fernandez de Castro y Andrade, the Tenth Count of Lemos, financed *El arca de Noé*. The viceroy, who came to the New World from Spain as an appointee of Charles II (1661–1700), was a leading proponent of lyrical theater and made several attempts to incorporate greater degrees of music into everyday life believing that public musical drama was an important means of instilling
religious values while consolidating vice regal authority. He likely was the only person with the financial means or interest in funding such an event.

There is much speculation about who composed the music for El arca de Noé, and the potential candidates make a telling list of Lima’s most illustrious musicians. Some attribute the work to Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco whereas others hypothesize that it was a lesser known composer, Lucas Ruis de Ribayaz. Both Ribayaz and Torrejón came together to Lima from Spain in 1667 with the new viceroy, but Torrejón seems a logical choice because he had already occupied a number of important positions, and because in 1689 he would provide the music for Lorenzo de la Llamosas’s zarzuela También se vengan los dioses. Moreover, in 1701, Torrejón staged the first opera in the New World, La púrpura de la rosa, after rewriting portions of Calderón’s work and composing new music (the original music had been lost.)

Torrejón traveled to Peru in 1667, where he was eventually appointed to be the chapel master of Lima Cathedral—the foremost musical post in the New World at the time—a position that allowed him to shape the city’s musical life and that of the many smaller outlying cities. His works were distributed to churches across South America and are today found in various church archives, as well as in Peru’s National Library. Torrejón was considered the foremost composer and musician in the New World during his age, and he was the first to be commissioned to provide musical works for public festivals and celebrations. In 1701, his new benefactor, the viceroy Melchor Portocarrero Lasso de la Vega, Count of Monclova (1636–1705), contracted with Torrejón to compose an opera to commemorate Philip V’s eighteenth birthday and first year as king of Spain. This was an unnerving assignment: Philip d’Anjou was a French Bourbon who had occupied the Spanish throne for only a year during which he was also fighting a war of succession against a competing suitor, Austria’s Archduke Charles, son of Emperor Leopold I. Although Philip had been named the heir by the recently deceased Charles II and was generally accepted in Spain, there were enough supporters for Archduke Charles to keep the war going until 1714, when the Bourbons were ultimately victorious. Much of the viceroy’s power had come from a successful military career fighting against the French during the previous century. Now, faced with allying with his enemy, he turned to the arts to demonstrate his loyalty to the new regime and to protect his position. As a result, Torrejón was given extraordinary funding, in the midst of decade-long financial downturn, to restage La púrpura de la rosa, which marked the entrance of opera in the Americas.

The choice of a Calderonian work is understandable since Torrejón was renowned in the New World and his plays had long enjoyed success in Lima. Moreover, the subject matter of his opera—peace and reconciliation between Spain and France—seemed especially fitting for the new political alliance. Torrejón likewise sought to demonstrate his artistic originality, so why not choose a work from a writer who had attempted to do the same? Notwithstanding the philosophical implications of choosing a Calderonian opera, there also may have been more practical reasons: Torrejón may have attended the original 1660 operas before embarking for the New World. According to Robert Stevenson, Torrejón’s position in the Count of Lemos’s retinue likely meant that he had accompanied the count to the theater in Madrid in 1660 to attend both of Calderón’s operas that year. Angeles Cardona, Donald Cruikshank, and Martin Cunningham similarly believe that Torrejón would have relished the opportunity to attend the most notable collaboration of the day, between the most significant dramatist (Calderón) and musician (Hidalgo). These critics count eighteen musical works (nine by Calderón), including the two operas that the young page could have attended before embarking for Peru. Moreover, Stein asserts that as the royal harpist and a well-known composer, Hidalgo could have been Torrejón’s personal teacher, which would have afforded him personal knowledge about the planning and production of the operas. Firsthand knowledge of both of the operas from 1660 would certainly lead one to understand why Torrejón would select Calderón’s original opera as the basis for his own. By choosing Calderón’s libretto, Torrejón did away with some of the problems associated with dramatic action and characterization, because he was using the work of a playwright whose ability to write a story was
unquestioned. Torrejón still had to set the story to music because the original Hidalgo score had been lost. Could he have remembered anything of the original 1660 presentation? Both Stevenson and Stein believe he did. Stevenson remarks, “How attentively he listened to Juan Hidalgo’s music can also be judged by anyone who will compare the truncated surviving score for Celos aun del aire with the complete score of his La púrpura de la rosa of 1701” a statement supported by Stein who declares that there are several sections in Torrejón’s version that may contain music from Hidalgo’s original 1659 musical score. Torrejón also needed to supervise the building of the stage sets and costume design, and, perhaps most daunting, he had to train singers and musicians who were not accustomed to this level of musical difficulty. And he needed to do these tasks in an environment unaccustomed to such musical and artistic complexity. Overall, the work ahead would have been daunting even for a well-trained and respected chapel master.

Torrejón refashioned the loa to more appropriately champion Philip V, and he completely rewrote the musical score for the main opera. The opera thus radiates propaganda in its blatant praise of the monarchy. This may have been exacerbated because Torrejón was seeking to secure additional patronage at a particularly difficult economic time. The opera was a magnificent public display and a significant development in the history of opera. Staged first in the viceroy’s palace, it was then moved to the main square in Lima, on December 19, 1701, for all to see. Today we have the libretti for both operas, but only Torrejón’s music survives. The loss of the original scores is not surprising: though collectors and wealthy patrons often purchased libretti, they rarely sought musical scores. In fact, a number of opera libretti survive from the period in Spain, Portugal, France, and Italy, but few musical scores. Instead, the music was often transmitted from musician to musician (which is why there is good reason to believe that if Torrejón attended Calderón’s original 1660 performance in Madrid, he may have remembered and re-created a good portion of it.)

Like Calderón’s work, Torrejón’s main opera tells the mythological story of Venus and Adonis to suggest that the union of love and strength can overcome hatred and jealousy for a more fruitful future union: “Despite jealousy Love has triumphed / and Venus and Adonis are seated together.” Such plots were the norm in Europe at the time. Whereas Calderón’s mythological plot and message remained a part of Torrejón’s main text, the motive and characters of the loa have changed: Torrejón’s loa features three of the nine muses who have united at Apollo’s mountain temple on Olympus to observe a new star in the sky. Together, they descend from the mountain to learn that the star represents the birth of a new monarchy led by Philip V. The message could not have been clearer: the departure from the splendor of Olympus suggests that audiences leave behind the past—their hatred for the rival French—and to unify behind the new star.

The loa’s remaining verses exalt Philip and his new monarchy. With references to light and the sun, there is an implicit comparison of Philip with previous monarchs in order to establish Philip as a legitimate successor to the Spanish crown. The chorus overtly states that loyalty to the new king will assure one’s place in the viceroyalty—no doubt a longed-for goal of the composer, who often toiled without pay. Even the allegorical character España is invoked to show how the planet Mars, the mythological God of War, supports the peace and prosperity of the new unification even though he has long been the source of conflict between the “two worlds” (the Austrian Habsburgs and the French Bourbons). España ends the skirmish by offering the crown to Philip V—which is historically correct since Charles II, as he lay dying, proclaimed Philip V the heir to the throne. As a result, España’s pronouncement obliges Mars to end the conflict.

Torrejón attempts to provide both justification and support for the new monarchy. He does this, in part, by linking the astronomical references in the opera to the king’s bloodline. The “planeta mayor” is the sun and fourth planet in Ptolemy’s system, followed by Mars, “el quinto planeta.” In this sense, Philip V is the fifth planet, heir to the sun, and the legitimate successor. Moreover, the mythological figures are acknowledging both paternal and maternal lines back to Spain. Philip is the grandson of the

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Torrejón refashioned the loa to more appropriately champion Philip V, and he completely rewrote the musical score for the main opera. The opera thus radiates propaganda in its blatant praise of the monarchy. This may have been exacerbated because Torrejón was seeking to secure additional patronage at a particularly difficult economic time. The opera was a magnificent public display and a significant development in the history of opera. Staged first in the viceroy’s palace, it was then moved to the main square in Lima, on December 19, 1701, for all to see. Today we have the libretti for both operas, but only Torrejón’s music survives. The loss of the original scores is not surprising: though collectors and wealthy patrons often purchased libretti, they rarely sought musical scores. In fact, a number of opera libretti survive from the period in Spain, Portugal, France, and Italy, but few musical scores. Instead, the music was often transmitted from musician to musician (which is why there is good reason to believe that if Torrejón attended Calderón’s original 1660 performance in Madrid, he may have remembered and re-created a good portion of it.)

Like Calderón’s work, Torrejón’s main opera tells the mythological story of Venus and Adonis to suggest that the union of love and strength can overcome hatred and jealousy for a more fruitful future union: “Despite jealousy Love has triumphed / and Venus and Adonis are seated together.” Such plots were the norm in Europe at the time. Whereas Calderón’s mythological plot and message remained a part of Torrejón’s main text, the motive and characters of the loa have changed: Torrejón’s loa features three of the nine muses who have united at Apollo’s mountain temple on Olympus to observe a new star in the sky. Together, they descend from the mountain to learn that the star represents the birth of a new monarchy led by Philip V. The message could not have been clearer: the departure from the splendor of Olympus suggests that audiences leave behind the past—their hatred for the rival French—and to unify behind the new star.

The loa’s remaining verses exalt Philip and his new monarchy. With references to light and the sun, there is an implicit comparison of Philip with previous monarchs in order to establish Philip as a legitimate successor to the Spanish crown. The chorus overtly states that loyalty to the new king will assure one’s place in the viceroyalty—no doubt a longed-for goal of the composer, who often toiled without pay. Even the allegorical character España is invoked to show how the planet Mars, the mythological God of War, supports the peace and prosperity of the new unification even though he has long been the source of conflict between the “two worlds” (the Austrian Habsburgs and the French Bourbons). España ends the skirmish by offering the crown to Philip V—which is historically correct since Charles II, as he lay dying, proclaimed Philip V the heir to the throne. As a result, España’s pronouncement obliges Mars to end the conflict.

Torrejón attempts to provide both justification and support for the new monarchy. He does this, in part, by linking the astronomical references in the opera to the king’s bloodline. The “planeta mayor” is the sun and fourth planet in Ptolemy’s system, followed by Mars, “el quinto planeta.” In this sense, Philip V is the fifth planet, heir to the sun, and the legitimate successor. Moreover, the mythological figures are acknowledging both paternal and maternal lines back to Spain. Philip is the grandson of the
famed Sun King, Louis XIV, and of the Planet King, Philip IV. The idea is to demonstrate that the new king is both a Habsburg and a Bourbon and that the powerful dynasties are finally united. It would not have been an easy task to persuade an audience who had lived its entire life under Habsburg sovereignty to suddenly embrace their rivals. This reinterpretation was easier and more believable once the audience understood the new king was a descendent of both royal lines.

The final verses nurture the theme of unification and peace, and seek to remind the spectators that harmony will once again return to Spain and its colonies:

Chorus
Long live Philip!
And may the trumpet
of speedy Fame acclaim
his name as invincible,
just, and kind,
from the Eastern hemisphere
of his birth! 30

The loa comes to a close by declaring Philip the rightful heir, not just because he shares the royal bloodline, but also because he is just and benevolent, and his fame, derived from the East (e.g., Europe), is perpetual. The loa ends with the composer insinuating that the main opera that will follow can be appreciated for its innovation and musicality because it will be sung throughout. As Calderón had done forty-one years before, Torrejón declares that this new musical-dramatic spectacle points to the importance of ingenuity and experimentation even as it also highlights the renewal of the musical life of the New World stage under the Bourbons.

Under the Bourbons, opera continued to be performed in Lima in the decades after Torrejón’s pioneering work. Audiences, however, remained reticent, funding waned, and there was a lack of trained singers and instrumentalists. 31 For the rest of the 18th century, opera remained a novelty in Lima.

Torrejón’s La púrpura de la rosa is followed chronologically in Mexico by Manuel de Zumaya’s La Parténope. Zumaya (also written as “Sumaya”) was a famed mestizo organist and chapel master who started his career as a choirboy in Mexico City’s cathedral. He may have studied in Italy around 1710, as he enjoyed a facility with the language and translated from Italian a number of works. In fact, his La Parténope was originally an Italian libretto by Silvio Stampiglia with music by Luigi Mancia and first performed in Naples in 1699. Since Zumaya’s manuscript offers both the original Italian and an unsigned Spanish translation on the opposite page, Zumaya probably undertook the translation work before adding his own musical score. Later, Zumaya competed for the post of chapel master in Mexico City, where he enjoyed a prolific career from 1715 to 1738. In 1738, Zumaya mysteriously resigned his post and moved to Oaxaca, where he worked as chaplain in the city’s cathedral, and then as chapel master from 1745 until his death in 1755. He compiled an extraordinary library of manuscripts, including an impressive personal output that included masses, motets, and villancicos. 32 Most of these are still held in the cathedral archives in both cities, but Zumaya’s sizeable production and contributions to musical life in Mexico were not known outside that country until the second half of the 20th century.

Zumaya’s full-length opera in three acts was commissioned by Viceroy Fernando de Alencastre Noroña y Silva (1662–1717) and produced at the vice-regal palace on May 1, 1711. La Parténope draws on the mythological story of Partenope, a siren who threw herself into the sea because she longed for the return of her love, Odysseus. Partenope’s body washed up on the shores of Naples, providing the name for part of the city’s coastline. In Stampiglia’s fictional account based on the tale, the siren becomes the Queen of Naples and is embroiled in a love triangle. Unfortunately, Zumaya’s musical score does not survive, nor do any testimonies about the opera. Nonetheless, we can discern a few likely characteristics of the work based on what was in vogue at the time and by examining Zumaya’s extant
works. First, the inclusion of the Spanish translation alongside the original Italian suggests that the work was sung in Italian and that the Spanish was meant to aid the audience’s comprehension. As such, *La Parténope* probably followed Neapolitan traditions of *opera seria* that featured an amalgamation of late 17th-century practices, such as the use of polyphony alternating with recitative parts and arias. Several of these characteristics can be found in Zumaya’s other works, particularly his villancicos. Moreover, *La Parténope* was not the first Zumaya drama to contain a high degree of music and lyrics. In 1708, he wrote a play set to music called *Rodrigo* in honor of the birth of Crown Prince Luis. The *Rodrigo* score also has been lost, but some testimonies from the period indicate it featured a wide range of singing parts. This summarizes all that we know about this *La Parténope*; Zumaya’s opera, however, was the first to be written in the Americas by an American-born composer.

New World Opera in the Missions

These works by Zumaya and Torrejón, as well as subsequent operas in Lima, depended on Italian musical trends found in previous Spanish models before their exportation to the New World. Outside the urban centers, however, the history of opera in the New World has been greatly enlarged thanks to the discovery by a Swiss architect, Hans Roth, of over 10,000 sheets of music dating to the Jesuit mission era in South America (ca. 1690 to 1767). Among the works that were uncovered were two short operas: *San Ignacio de Loyola*, written by the Roman organist and composer Domenico Zipoli, and *San Francisco Xavier*, composed by an unknown Indian composer and written in the native Chiquitano language. Unlike Zumaya’s and Torrejón’s secular operas, both operas are sacred works. Zipoli’s *San Ignacio* tells the story of the Saints Ignacio Loyola and Francis Xavier, and *San Francisco* retells the life of the latter. Both operas instruct audiences about the two men’s role in the founding of the Company of Jesus, and instill basic Catholic principles regarding baptism, sin, redemption, and heaven.

After the Jesuits were expelled, in 1767, the missions, which had been founded in the Paraguay region in the decades after 1680, remained mostly abandoned until Hans Roth was hired in 1972 to renovate some of the mission churches in Bolivia. Roth amassed a trove of manuscripts that included the mission operas discussed here and a large variety of musical instruments that eventually drew the attention of teams of musicologists, who began cataloging the extensive collections.

The Jesuits developed a rich musical and theatrical practice based on what was in fashion when they had left Europe and on what they had learned upon arriving in the New World. The missionaries routinely used plays and music in their teaching, believing that the melodic practice of poetic verses helped instill Catholic virtues, in addition to improving memory, physical presence, and rhetorical abilities. They then took these models and incorporated local costumes and traditions, including the native languages, and located European themes within native contexts. When new missionaries arrived, they brought news of changing trends in Europe, which were integrated into local culture, amounting to a virtual nonstop renewal of music in the missions. As for the performance of lyrical dramas, indigenous actors staged the works and also took responsibility for the minimal stage sets, costumes, and, of course, the music. Many works were written in native tongues for the benefit of indigenous audiences who were not familiar with European languages.

One of these works, Domenico Zipoli’s *San Ignacio*, is emblematic of the Jesuit use of music and performance to provide religious instruction. Originally written in Spanish, a companion text in Chiquitano suggests that the priests were most interested in imparting a particular message and did not depend on a specific language to do so. The technicality of the work—arias, choruses (in duos or trios), and dances—point to a strong inclination toward Florentine opera. However, the work also uses structures that were common in Neapolitan opera, such as the standard separation of arias by short recitatives, very few characters, an emphasis on sacred themes, and the use of a sinfonia, or overture,
which, in Zipoli’s opera, was titled “Llamada a la fiesta.” These reflect Zipoli’s background: he was born in Tuscany, and studied with important teachers in Florence, Bologna, Rome, and even Naples, where he worked under the famed Alessandro Scarlatti. He was an accomplished organist and wrote one of the century’s most important pieces for the organ, *Sonate d’intavolatura* (1711). In Rome, Zipoli held the coveted post of organist of the Church of the Gesù, the mother church of the Society of Jesus. By 1716, Zipoli had joined the Jesuits, traveled to Seville, and then to the Paraguay missions, where he would remain until his death, in 1726. In Córdoba, Argentina, in the former Paraguay province, when he was studying to be ordained, Zipoli wrote hundreds of musical pieces that were copied and distributed throughout the missions. No European of greater stature lived in such proximity to the missions or composed so many pieces that became a regular part of the musical rotation across the missions.

With a performance time of approximately forty minutes, Zipoli’s *San Ignacio* is quite brief compared to modern operas that tend to last several hours, but it nonetheless provides some scope for study. Part One, “Mensajero,” relates the story of St. Ignatius’s confrontation with evil and rejection of temptation. Part Two, “Despedida,” concentrates on Francis Xavier’s historic mission to Asia to convert the native populations. The depictions of the founders in both parts reiterate long-standing portrayals of the evangelization as a “battle” against heresy, and both are characterized as warring holy men. 

Bellicose terms throughout underscore the fight for salvation and emblematize a combative rhetoric that runs counter to more pious and conciliatory tones in other Jesuit dramas. Instead, Ignacio declares he will confront evil accompanied by his “escuadrón volante,” an army of battle-tested angels who will fight at his side. The message clearly informs the audience that the fight ahead is a monumental war of good versus evil. The depiction of Loyola and his soldiers in an epic battle to protect Christianity probably should not surprise a modern-day audience: the historical Ignacio was a soldier, and his management of the Company of Jesus was military-like.

The aggressive rhetoric is more suppressed in the second part. Here, Ignacio describes how humankind has lived blindly and has easily succumbed to the devil’s appeals: “Oh, blind heathens condemned to the shadows / without ever finding truth!” But the general tone is one of compassion. Instead of an internal battle between Ignacio and evil, an angel appears to sing that the next battle for salvation will take place the other side of the world: “From your fire a lightning bolt will illuminate the Orient.” This seems a reference to the worldwide Jesuit mission enterprise, including the South America project. The song serves to both validate the Jesuit settlements to the audience currently living in them and to underscore Jesuit history, particularly Xavier’s missionary work abroad. The two-part opera, then, carefully reconstructs the foundation of the order and highlights for audiences the most important doctrinal messages. In this sense, the opera is similar to those by Torrejón or Calderón, who were seeking to persuade audiences to embrace a particular ideological message. *San Ignacio* also exemplifies mission activity, from performance and staging to collaboration among different authors in different locations across a wide mission area. As such, the opera stands out as a cross-cultural tool marking a close and shared working relationship between the Jesuits and the indigenous people.

The same can be said of the other opera found in the Chiquitos mission area, *San Francisco Xavier*. This opera is shorter and far less complex. It has eight arias divided by an ongoing dialogue between Ignacio and Xavier. Parts of *San Francisco* have been lost; others are fragmented, but the majority of the arias are intact. Perhaps most surprising is that the entire opera was composed in the native Chiquitano language and there was no corresponding Spanish translation. It is therefore reasonable to believe it was written by was an especially talented indigenous composer. The opera is quite unpretentious, and every aria promotes the memorization of specific words or phrases routinely used in Church teachings or sermons; it is a sort of teaching through rote. The vast majority of the arias describe heaven and the importance of accepting God. The sixth aria, “There are so Many to be Baptized,” provides the overarching theme for the entire opera: “There are so many to be baptized, / and by doing so they are converted, / they become great.” The verses leading up to this moment provide foundational
knowledge about the pleasures of embracing Christianity: a celebration with God in heaven that symbolizes the peace and prosperity that conversion brings. The aria, however, also intensifies the message of conversion by seeking to draw the indigenous populations to baptism, the sacrament the Jesuits considered the most important in their evangelical efforts. However, as noted, apart from these very direct messages, this opera offers a limited scope for study, and its theme or message is not as exemplary as is the story behind the work.\footnote{39}

Whereas opera in Spain was strictly an urban phenomenon, opera in the New World developed along two branches: those in Lima or Mexico City reflect European court preferences for secular music, and those in the Jesuit missions represent a sacred style. From a technical and musical standpoint, both traditions depended on models being developed in Italy, yet they were imbued with the politics and ideology of the locations in which they were composed.

**Discussion of the Literature**

Most scholarship on early opera in Spain and the New World approaches the subject from two main perspectives: that of musicologists and ethnomusicologists, who study the voice, instrumentation, musical notation, and the culture that gave rise to it, and that of literary critics who want to understand the dramatic verse, performance, staging, and spectacle and how the text reveals important insights into the sociopolitical context that produced it. To examine early opera in depth, a combination of approaches must be taken into consideration.

The basis for much of the early work done on early opera in both Spain and the Americas comes from the research of Robert M. Stevenson, the renowned musicologist who dealt with virtually every topic related to music in the Americas and in Spain. Stevenson’s *The Music of Peru: Aboriginal and Viceroyal Epochs* (1959) is a compendium of virtually all music performed from pre-Colombian times through the independence movements of the 19th century, and it even treats Torrejón and Zipoli (with unavoidable reference to Calderón). Another major study that addresses the overall context for music in the Americas is Daniel Mendoza de Arce’s *Music in Ibero-America to 1850* (2001) which, like Stevenson’s book, is a comprehensive examination of musical traditions that includes not only pre-Colombian contributions but also those by Spaniards in the New World and by their offspring, the criollos. Stevenson also is responsible for some of the earliest single studies on opera in the New World: “Opera Beginnings in the New World” (1959), “The First New-World Opera” (1964), *La púrpura de la rosa: Estudios preliminar y transcripción de la música de Robert Stevenson* (1976), and “Zipoli’s Transit through Dictionaries: A Tercentenary Remembrance” (1988), as well as general studies of music in Spain, such as *Spanish Music in the Age of Columbus* (1960). Stevenson provided the basis for most of the study of early music that followed.

With respect to early opera, Louise K. Stein is generally considered the most significant scholar to assess the development of the genre on both sides of the Atlantic. Although she has written dozens of scholarly pieces on early modern music in Spain and the New World, her most important work is *Songs of Mortals, Dialogues of the Gods: Music and Theatre in Seventeenth-Century Spain* (1993), which was the first comprehensive examination of 17th-century theatrical music and serves as the foundation for our understanding of lyrical theater. Stein nearly single-handedly brought to light the significance of the Calderón/ Torrejón opera in such studies as “‘La música de dos orbes’: A Context for the First Opera of the Americas” (2008) and, with José Máximo Leza, “Opera, Genre, and Context in Spain and its American Colonies” (2009). Her work is informed by the exhaustive musicological examination of *La púrpura* by Cardona, Cruikshank, and Cunningham (1990), which provides not only a critical edition of both versions of the opera, with full notes, but also a highly detailed sociopolitical and economic study of the context in which Calderón and Torrejón worked. My research on this topic in *Transatlantic Arias: Early Opera in
Spain and the New World (2013) and “Public Reception, Politics and Propaganda in Torrejón’s La purpura de la rosa, the First New World Opera” (2003) is heavily indebted to the Cardona and colleagues’ edition and to Stein’s groundbreaking work—particularly as it relates to the ideological and propagandistic nature of opera. Stein’s other studies, such as “La plática de los dioses” (1986) and “Opera and the Spanish Political Agenda” (1991) likewise provide interesting and insightful examinations of the political ramifications of opera.

Shirley Whitacker’s “Florentine Opera Comes to Spain: Lope de Vega’s La selva sin amor” (1984) is one of only a handful of studies of Lope de Vega’s opera. Whitacker’s extensive archival research featuring letters exchanged between Florentine diplomats reconstructed the original production of the work. Matthew Stroud’s critical edition with notes on Celos aun del aire matan (1981) remains mandatory for anyone wishing to study that opera, and it also includes the scenery drawings from the performance. Stroud’s is the first critical edition of the opera, and remains one of the few.

With respect to opera in the Americas, we can separate out the productions in urban centers like Lima and those that occurred in outposts like the Jesuit missions. With respect to the former, in addition to Stein, Juan Antonio Rodríguez-Garrido’s unpublished doctoral dissertation, “Teatro y poder en el palacio virreinal de Lima (1672–1707)” (2003), is an excellent introduction to the various composers, their works, and the musical-political context for musical production in early 18th-century Lima. Also of interest is Jerry M. William’s “Enlightened Lima: A 1707 Tribute to Philip V, Calderón, and the Return of the Siglo de Oro” (1990) and “Peralta Barnuevo and the Influence of Calderón’s Operatic Legacy to Viceregal Peru” (2006).

Concerning Zipoli’s San Ignacio and the anonymous San Francisco Xavier, several well-respected musicologists have undertaken most of the studies. Bernardo Illari, who discovered the Zipoli manuscript, discusses the find as well as Zipoli’s previously unknown role in the Americas in “Metastasio nel’Indie: De operas ausentes y arias presentes en América colonial” (1999). Illari’s introduction to the book of the compact disc recording of Kapsberger and Zipoli: The Jesuit Operas (2003) is valuable for understanding the technical elements of this opera and the context in which it was written.

Other than my monograph, Transatlantic Arias, and “Opera and Spanish Evangelization in the New World” (2008), most of the research on San Francisco has been carried out by Piotr Nawrot and Leonard Waisman. Nawrot’s rather extensive volumes, Indígenes y cultura musical de las reducciones Jesuíticas (2000) and Archivo musical de Moxos-Antología: Evangelización y música en las reducciones Jesuíticas (2004) provide the cultural context regarding the operations of the Jesuit missions, their philosophy with respect to aesthetics, and emphasizes the Indians’ own participation in the Jesuit’s strategies of evangelization. Nawrot includes many eyewitness accounts and primary texts, but his study—though it is outstanding—does privilege the more positive aspects of the Jesuits’ treatment of the Indians. For a more balanced view, see Leonard Waisman’s “La música en las misiones de Mojos: Algunos caracteres diferenciales” (2002) and “Urban Music in the Wilderness: Ideology and Power in the Jesuit Reducciones, 1609–1767” (2011).

Primary Sources

Lope de Vega published La selva sin amor in 1630 as part of his Laurel de Apolo, con otras rimas. The original manuscript is held in Madrid’s Biblioteca Nacional (MS 3661), and there is also a version held by Lima’s National Library, although it is unclear when the latter arrived in the New World or whether Torrejón would have consulted it for his own opera of 1701. It is quite possible the National Library came to hold the manuscript well after the period in question.

Calderón de la Barca’s La purpura de la rosa was first published in 1664 by Juan de Vera Tassis y Villaruel as part of Tercera Parte de Comedias de D. Pedro Calderón de la Barca in Madrid. The music
was not published along with the libretto, and the original manuscript for *La purpura* is no longer extant. The Tassis edition likely was Torrejón’s source since it is known to have arrived in the New World in 1687. Torrejón’s own manuscript is catalogued under the call number C1469 at the Biblioteca Nacional in Lima. The Lima manuscript contains eighty-nine pages, including Calderón’s original main opera and Torrejón’s refashioned *loa* and new music.

With respect to *Celos aun del aire matan*, José Subirá found Act 1 in 1927, when he was browsing in the collection owned by House of Alba and published in his *La música en la Casa de Alba* (Madrid: Houser & Memet, 1927). The entire three acts are contained in a single manuscript held in Évora, Portugal, which was discovered in 1942 by Luís Freitas Branco, and a partially complete manuscript is housed in the Biblioteca del Palacio de Liria. The completeness of the Évora manuscript makes *Celos aun del aire matan* the first extant opera because it includes the entire musical score and all the acts.

The story of the discovery of *San Ignacio* and *San Francisco Xavier* is, in my opinion, as important as the study of the works themselves. In the early 1970s, in the bishop’s archives of the Diocese of Concepción de Chiquitos, in eastern Bolivia, over 10,000 sheets of sacred music dating from the Jesuit era were discovered that had been transferred there from many other former Jesuit reductions originally located in central South America. Burhardt Jungcurt was the first to inventory the manuscripts, followed by Leonardo Waismian, Gerardo Huseby, Irma Ruiz, and Bernardo Illari (1999). The latter team accomplished most of the definitive cataloguing, which was published in *Catálogo de Obras del Archivo Musical de Chiquitos* (Buenos Aires: Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, 1999).

Bernardo Illari discovered Domenico Zipoli’s *San Ignacio* in two parts, in Chiquitos and Moxos, respectively. Illari edited his own edition, which can be found in the sound recording booklet of *The Jesuit Operas*. Illari provided the title used to identify the work because none had been included on the actual manuscript. Illari also divided the work into several scenes in imitation of early 18th-century operatic style. *San Francisco Xavier* can be found in two separate editions by Piotr Nawrot. The first, published in 2000 as part of volume 3 of his *Indígenas y cultura musical de las Reducciones Jesuíticas*, includes Nawrot’s transcription from the original Chiquitano and his Spanish translation, done with the help of teachers from a school in San Antonio de Lomerio, where a variant of 18th-century Chiquitano is still spoken. He also includes an updated transcription in modern Chiquitano. The second edition is the libretto for the 2006 compact disc recording *Mission San Xavier: Ópera y misa de los Indios para la Fiesta de San Francisco Xavier*.

It is worth noting that during the spring of every other year, Concepción hosts the International Festival of Renaissance and Baroque American Music, a remarkable celebration of classical music, which coincides with the International Musicology Symposium. Also known more generally as the Chiquitos Missions Festival, over the course of ten days some eight hundred musicians from twenty-four countries and more than 90,000 aficionados from around the world converge on the Bolivian mission area to perform more than 150 concerts featuring 17th- and 18th-century musical works. Many of the pieces performed celebrate the best music from the classical period by Vivaldi, Mozart, Bach, and even Torrejón. What makes the festival truly remarkable is that performers play at least one of the recently discovered pieces, now held in Concepción’s archives. Zipoli’s *San Ignacio de Loyola* and the anonymous *San Francisco Xavier* premiered at the festival; Torrejón y Velasco is in regular rotation, just as he was in the early 18th century. *Videos of these performances*[^1] *abound on video-sharing websites.*

**Further Reading**


Gasta, Chad M. *Transatlantic Arias: Early Opera in Spain and the New World*. Madrid: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2013.


**Notes**

1. The first documented opera performance in North America was André Grétry’s *Sylvain*, on May 22, 1796, in New Orleans, which was still under Spanish rule at the time.

2. The *comedia*, Spain’s national drama, was a popular form of mass entertainment that saw its most influential and successful period during the 17th century. The two most prominent comediantes were Lope de Vega
(1562–1635) and Calderón de la Barca (1600–1681). Both enjoyed stellar careers writing plays for popular audiences, performed in local playhouses, or for the king and the nobility, performed in their private palaces. Lope is considered the father of the *comedia nueva* because he broke with all previous theatrical traditions: he moved to a three-act structure composed entirely in a variety of poetic verses; mixed tragedy and comedy; featured popular themes such as love, violence, justice, and honor wrapped up in historical, mythological, or religious storylines; and did away with the Aristotelian unities of time, place, and action. The *comedia* under Lope was so successful that other playwrights began composing up to three 4-hour plays in verse each month. It is believed that Lope wrote a new play every three to four days, possibly making him the author of hundreds of dramas (800 of which are extant). His productivity and popularity led an envious Miguel de Cervantes to call Lope a “monstro de la naturaleza.”


4. The *entremés* was a satirical burlesque comic or grotesque short play performed between the first and second acts of the larger *comedia*, and it often featured a short lyrical portion, taken from the masque tradition, called the *mojiganga*. The *jácara* was usually performed after the second act and was a brief lyrical piece with burlesque or satirical qualities whose themes often centered on the street life of pimps, prostitutes, and thugs. *Bailes* were dances that also featured rhymed poetry (in a monologue or dialogue) with musical accompaniment.


30. **Coro** ¡Viva, Felipe,
y su nombre aclame
el clarín de la fama veloz,
por invencible,
por justo y benigno,
desde el oriente
de su formación!

Torrejón y Velasco, *La púrpura de la rosa*, 46.


32. Villancicos, or “carols,” were performed around Christmastime each year, especially at the Misa de Gallo, a midnight mass celebrated on December 24. Their origins can be traced to the medieval period when they were sung according to the prominent events of the liturgical calendar. By the 16th century, villancicos had become more popular, deriving their name from the lower-class villanos who sung them. These tended to be polyphonic and sung by groups of three or four, accompanied by a vihuela.


38. "Son muchos los que tienen que ser bautizados."

    Aub’apaezo ūriabo roma,          Son muchos los que tienen que ser bautizados,
    aub’apaezo cinímanasrna,          recién se están haciendo grandes,
    aub’apaezo oxirna tañarna.        recién se están convirtiendo


39. Ample discussion of both the libretto for *San Francisco Xavier* and the Jesuit mission enterprise can be found in Gasta, *Tranatlantic Arias*. 