THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION AND POLITICAL FUNCTION OF SPAIN’S RECITADO IN CELOS AUN DEL AIRE MATAN (1661)

A Thesis in
Musicology

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the development of opera in one of the world’s largest empires during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Spain. Musicologists such as Louise K. Stein, José María Domínguez, and José Subirá have researched the first evidence of the Italian genre in the Spanish royal court. Two contrasting arguments have resulted from their conclusions. The first argument states that the Spanish opera does not follow the Italian model of the late seventeenth century and therefore does not attest to Italian influence. On the other hand, other musicologists argue that the Spanish genre does reflect the Italianate taste of the Spanish court, but that past research is tainted with nationalism. These seemingly opposing conclusions may be reconciled through an analysis of the political and philosophical context surrounding the evolution of opera in Spain.

The first surviving, fully sung Spanish opera, *Celos aun del aire matan* (1661), composed by Juan Hidalgo (1614-1685) on a libretto by Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600-1681), provides the groundwork for this thesis. An analysis of versification, meter, and vertical sonorities found in the Spanish recitado during key scenes of *Celos aun del aire matan* delineates the influence of early Italian stile recitativo. Through this study I argue that the differentiation of Calderón de la Barca’s and Hidalgo’s theoretical basis in conjunction with the social and political role of the genre in seventeenth-century Spain contributes to the discussion concerning the development of opera. This study further enriches our knowledge of the consequences of Italy’s musical innovation.
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Ideas are born, they struggle, triumph, change, and they are transformed; but is there a dead idea which in the end does not live on, transformed into a broader and clearer goal? ✤ Eugenio María de Hostos

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“En todo tiempo ama al amigo, y es como un hermano en tiempo de angustia.”

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“Porque de él, y por él, y para él, son todas las cosas. A él sea la gloria por los siglos. Amén.”

Romanos 11:36
INTRODUCTION
Jacopo Peri (1561-1633), Giulio Caccini (1551-1618), and Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) revolutionized secular music in Italy in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Their experiments with musical texture to express the emotion of the text led to the creation of a new genre—opera. Peri and Caccini, aware of their significant contributions, documented their findings and fought for recognition. The introduction of the stile recitativo and development of early opera in Italy had a strong influence on the establishment of opera in France, Germany, and England.

Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) used the Italian model of opera to create a musical style that appealed to King Louis XIV and his audience. Inheriting the throne at age five, Louis XIV grew up surrounded by resentment against foreign rulers. His mother, Anne of Austria (1601-1666), ruled France along with Cardinal Mazarin (1601-1661), an Italian. With the death of the cardinal, Louis XIV decided to establish his absolute power in the monarchy. He stylized himself as the “Sun King,” the giver of light. For his political campaign, he used various art forms including music. Jean-Baptiste Lully had the task of developing a distinctive French opera that was to last a century. After Luigi Rossi’s *Orfeo* (1647) and Francesco Cavalli’s *Ercole amante* (1662) received great opposition in France, Lully collaborated with Jean-Baptiste Molière (1622-1673) to combine elements of ballet and opera. From Lully’s later collaborations with playwright
Jean-Philippe Quinault (1635-1688) France’s *tragédie lyrique* emerged finally reconciling music, ballet, and drama.¹

Heinrich Schütz (1585-1672) composed his first opera based on a German translation of Ottavio Rinuccini’s libretto for *Dafne*, which had been set to music by Peri in 1598. In the late seventeenth century, German poets translated Italian libretti. The newly written libretti followed the subject matter and structure of Italian libretti. Musically, Germans also adopted the Italian recitative style, but experimented and varied the arias. Aside from Schütz, Reinhard Keiser (1674-1739) became the most prolific composer of German opera leaving a legacy of more than sixty works.²

In England, Henry Purcell (1659-1695) adopted Italian and French ideas to satisfy the English taste. Contrary to the French absolutist monarchy, the English monarchy shared its power with the Parliament. The seventeenth century brought various changes of government and the English Civil War (1642-1649). After the war, Parliament reserved


the right to pass laws and limited the monarchs to the rule of law. In comparison to the French and Spanish counterparts, the English monarchy had less money to spend in the arts. Nonetheless, Purcell received royal patronage throughout his career composing the beautiful opera *Dido and Aeneas* (1689). The combination of the French overture with the Italian arias only briefly denotes the spread of ideas throughout Europe in this century.³

Musicologists have researched and traced the parallels between these nations and the founding fathers of the genre. The work of the composers aforementioned attest to the impact of politics on their output and how they experimented with the genre to reconcile foreign ideas with local customs. Nonetheless, the relationship between Italian and Spanish opera remains uncertain and worth extensive investigation.

The first surviving, full-length Spanish opera is *Celos aun del aire matan* (Jealousy, Even of the Wind, Kills), composed by Juan Hidalgo (1614-1685) on a libretto by Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600-1681). It premiered on 6 June 1661 for the celebration of peace between Spain and France after the Thirty Years’ War and the commemoration of the first-year anniversary of King Louis XIV’s marriage to Infanta María Teresa. Musicologist Louise K. Stein published the critical edition of this opera in 2014 after revising a transcription of the original manuscript discovered by musicologist José Subirá at the Liria Palace in Madrid, Spain in 1927. Two opposing lines of thought

have sprung in the scholarly analysis of this opera: 1) the composition of this work does not follow the Italian model, and 2) the work reflects the Italianate taste at the court of King Philip IV of Spain. In the introduction to *Celos aun del aire matan*, Stein states that due to stylistic modifications Hidalgo applied to his composition, the opera fails to comply with the Italian model of opera. She bases her arguments on musical analyses. On the other hand, José María Domínguez, Jack Sage, and José Subirá argue that the Italian influence is present, but has been studied through a negative veil of nationalism.4

These seemingly opposing conclusions may be reconciled when separating the philosophical foundation from the contextual function of opera in Spain. In my thesis I explore how the differentiation of Calderón de la Barca and Hidalgo’s theoretical basis for the composition of the opera versus the social and political role of the genre in Philip IV’s court contributes to the discussion concerning the cultural and political forces that led to the emergence of opera in Spain.

Chapter 1 discusses the kingdom the sixteen-year-old Philip IV inherited from his father, Philip III, amidst the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648). The tension between the Habsburg dynasty and France, the loss of Portugal (1640), and the Great Plague of Seville (1647-1652) discouraged the people of Spain. Therefore, Philip IV sought after the restoration of the monarchy’s vigor as an antidote to past bitter experiences. His

patronage of the arts reveal the challenges Juan Hidalgo and Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca faced when composing *Celos aun del aire matan*, which ultimately resulted in a variant form of the Italian opera model.

Chapter 2 presents a study of Calderón de la Barca and Hidalgo’s background to expose political ideologies, religious predispositions, and personal experiences that shaped their conception of the genre and their stylistic preferences. As an ordained priest, Calderón de la Barca perceived the arts and the role of the king differently than Hidalgo who as a sixteen-year-old harpist began serving Philip IV’s court. Hence, an examination of key events in their lives, their theatrical and musical output, and their relationship as librettist and composer provide the foundation for understanding their adaptation of Italian opera.

In Chapter 3, I define the philosophical and theoretical groundwork of the Italian *stile recitativo* and the Spanish *recitado* suggesting the influence of Italy on the techniques employed in Spain’s first three-act opera, even if with variations. These alterations are justified in an exploration of the specific political function of opera in late seventeenth-century Spain. Through an analysis of meter, harmony, and *versification*, Spanish *recitado* is understood as an adaptation of the Italian *stile recitativo*. Lastly, I argue that the slow introduction of opera in Spain derives from political associations resulting in a poor reception of the genre.

Formulating the philosophical ramifications of Italian opera and the purpose of the genre in Spain allows one to perceive the importance of Italy’s musical innovations in the production of Spain’s first full-length opera, *Celos aun del aire matan*, in 1661.
Although musicologists recognize the impact of Italian opera in the musical advancement of France, England, and Germany, the influence of Italian opera on Spain remains contested. This thesis considers *Celos aun del aire matan* in its historical and political context in an attempt to understand the techniques the librettist and composer adapted to produce a masterpiece for the king and the people of Madrid. Furthermore, these findings underscore the association between Italian and Spanish opera, thus furthering our knowledge of the significance of the musical techniques of seventeenth-century Italy and its repercussions throughout Western Europe.
Chapter 1

POLITICAL UPHEAVALS IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY SPAIN
Spanish Political Agenda

In the seventeenth century, Western Europe faced dramatic changes with lasting repercussions. From scientific discoveries to musical innovations, a wide range of ideas fostered research in politics, science, mathematics, and the arts. Johannes Kepler and Galileo Galilei made important discoveries about our solar system. Sir Francis Bacon argued that scientific research must rely on empirical data rather than ancient authorities. Sir Isaac Newton not only experimented with the laws of gravity but also established the foundation for the modern scientific method. In politics, intellectuals discussed both extremes: from the rights of the people to the consequences of a centralized, all-powerful government. These political concepts not only impacted Western Europe, but also the Americas, due to European colonial ambitions overseas and the establishment of colonies. Territorial expansion encouraged the rise of capitalism, creating an invigorating economic engine with the potential to overthrow monarchies and distribute the riches to non-aristocratic families.

These scientific and social developments influenced the creation of new genres of music. Political struggles in Western Europe, at a macro level, incited the patronage of the arts as a demonstration of power and cultural prestige. Hence, Italy, France, Germany, England, and Spain, among other nations, spent much of their wealth in the cultivation of the arts. Nonetheless, at a micro level, these nations wanted to build their own political ideology, causing peculiarities that affected cultural development. The growth of public
demand for published music, musical instruments, and private music lessons represents some of the oddities generated in particular nations, such as Italy and France.¹

The emergence of opera in the seventeenth century represents one of the greatest musical innovations in the history of music. Italian musicians and intellectuals in the *Seicento* revolutionized not only musical compositions, but also musical consumption. As the Florentine Camerata convened in Italy, the growth of national musical idioms also materialized in France, Germany, and England. In Spain, research concerning the emergence of opera is hindered by the scarcity of primary documents. A devastating fire in the Royal Palace in Madrid, Spain in 1723 destroyed a great part of the archives along with much of the music composed for the court. The surviving evidence does, however, provide a framework for understanding the evolution of opera and its reverberation in Spain’s musical development.

La selva sin amor (The Lovelorn Forest, 1629), La púrpura de la rosa (The Blood of the Rose, 1660), and Celos aun del aire matan (Jealousy, even unfounded, kills, 1661) represent the first evidence of opera at the Spanish court. Of these three works, only for Celos aun del aire matan do both music and libretto survive. Musicological research has suffered from nationalistic ideologies, unstated prejudices, and personal taste hindering the trace of external influences on Spanish opera. Furthermore, political perceptions,

2. Danièle Becker, “El intento de fiesta real cantada ‘Celos aun del aire matan,’” *Revista de Musicología* 5 (1982): 297-308. For La selva sin amor two different dates appear. Becker states that it was performed in 1629, while Louise K. Stein contends that its first performance occurred in December 1627. She states, “It was given as a private entertainment for the royal family by members of the Florentine embassy in Madrid, in an attempt to attract King Philip IV’s favor and secure a solid court appointment for the stage designer Cosimo Lotti, sent from the Tuscan court. For this tiny production, the Florentines drafted the king’s favorite musician, Filippo Piccinini from Bologna, known as a theorbo player but unfamiliar with the recitative style.” Louise K. Stein, ed., introduction to *Celos aun del aire matan: Fiesta cantada* (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2014), x.


economic turmoil, and foreign occupation tainted the reception of this new genre.\textsuperscript{5} The production of these operas resulted from political relations and commemorated decisive political affairs. For this reason, to understand the political implications and the public’s reception of the first surviving Spanish opera, \textit{Celos aun del aire matan}, it is first necessary to understand the political history of Spain in this period.

\textbf{Political Upheavals in Spain}

In the sixteenth century, Spain acquired great wealth, becoming one of the largest global empires due to the expansion of the kingdom overseas. The importation of slaves, sugar, tobacco, gold, and silver from the colonies provided an abundance of money. The kingdom reached its pinnacle under the rule of the Habsburg dynasty, whose dominion extended from Spain and the Netherlands to Austria and Naples, and reached overseas to the American territories. King Charles I of Spain (r. 1516-1556), also known as Charles V and the Holy Roman emperor, was the son of Philip I (r. July-September 1506), king of Castile, and Joan the Mad. His bloodline included the Holy Roman Emperor Philip I and Duchess of Burgundy Mary (r. 1477-1482), and Ferdinand II (r. 1475-1504) and Isabella I (r. 1474-1504), king and queen of Spain. The sudden death of King Ferdinand II in 1516

\textsuperscript{5} Louise K. Stein, “Musical Patronage: The Spanish Royal Court,” \textit{Revista de Musicología} 16 (1993): 615-19. The first performances of opera in Spain occurred in critical political events. The first opera in 1629 (or 1627), \textit{La selva sin amor}, produced by Florentine diplomats, was performed for a limited audience consisting of the king’s favorites. The second and third operas, \textit{La púrpura de la rosa} and \textit{Celos aun del aire matan}, served as entertainment for the royal court’s festivities surrounding the marriage between Louis XIV of France and Infanta María Teresa of Spain. Therefore, the public perceived opera as an elite genre promoted by foreigners and not appropriate as a national genre.
left Spain with a power struggle. With no heir and various royal families willing to
assume the throne, war determined the victor. Charles I won in 1516 with little
knowledge of Spanish culture or language. In 1519, he was proclaimed king of Germany
after the death of his grandfather, Maximilian I (r. 1486-1519). Leaving Spain after a
short stay left the people dissatisfied, which led to revolts against the crown. During this
time, Spain fought great battles as the defender of Roman Catholicism against
Protestantism and the Islamic invasion of the Ottoman Empire. In 1556, Charles I
abdicated his throne and his son, Philip II, came into power.6

King Philip II (r. 1556-1558) reigned during the Roman Catholic Counter-
Reformation. His inability to act quickly and decisively in the political sphere led to
rebellions in the Netherlands, Granada, and Aragon. War against England and France
began as Spain tried to conquer Portugal’s monarchy. The Spanish Armada defeated the
Ottoman Empire in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. The French king, Henry IV, converted
to Catholicism, and Spain remained at the height of its power. King Philip II seemed
satisfied with what he declared as his service to God—preventing the spread of heresy in
Europe. When he died of cancer in 1598, Philip III succeeded him.

From 1598 to 1621, Philip III relied on royal favorites to govern Spain. The
continuous hostility with the Turks, rivalry with the Republic of Venice and the Duchy of
Savoy, and the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War (1618-1648) with France compromised
peace in Western Europe. Spain needed a militant leader, but Philip III’s indifference to
his responsibilities and reluctance to engage with his subjects weakened his kingdom. An

6. For information on sources, see footnote 1.
exhausted military force, growing economic problems due in part to tax inflations, and restless people summarize the kingdom Philip III left his son Philip IV in 1621. Three years into the Thirty Years’ War, this sixteen-year-old boy assumed the throne during Spain’s decline as a one of the great political powers of Western Europe.

A Patron of the Arts is Born

Philip IV reigned amidst the Thirty Years’ War. His active plan to eliminate his father’s royal favorites brought him a considerable amount of respect with his subjects. He sought after the restoration of the Spanish monarchy in the eyes of the people and all of Europe. For this purpose, he became a fervent patron of the arts. He ordered the construction of a second estate where he would entertain himself and others. El Buen Retiro Palace in Madrid, Spain consisted of twenty buildings, two large outdoor spaces, and great ponds and gardens. Federico Bravo Morata describes the entertainment of the king’s court as follows:

The pond of Buen Retiro served as a venue for sumptuous gatherings since Philip IV’s reign. One of the entertainments consisted of grand horse rides, adorned to represent Venus’s conch, that crossed Madrid on its way to the gardens...Once in Buen Retiro, the rides would park near the pond and there, over wooden planks floating in the water, the female dancer performed before the kings and the Court some boring classical dances...Regal amusement in Philip IV’s Madrid was the
Historical accounts of violent spectacles of the king and his people abound. Public hangings, burnings, and killings occurred in Madrid’s square. The dead bulls would be carried through the streets for the entertainment of the people. “Each public execution was a feast where the most important aspect was to have a good seat from which to see every detail…Father Andrés Manuel [who was condemned of treason and espionage] gave thanks to the king for changing his sentence from public dismemberment by four horses to public hanging and posterior dismemberment.”

Madrid grew accustomed to the smell of blood, burning flesh, and grand, violent spectacles. “In a century generally characterized and conditioned by crisis, it is a fact of history that monarchs exploited the fiesta, the wonderful and spectacular, to distract and control the populace.” The aforementioned activities of the king and his court occurred in the public eye to awe the people, subdue the masses, and restore power to the monarchy in a Machiavellian

7. Federico Bravo Morata, *Historia de Madrid*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Madrid: Fenicia, 1970), 110-11. “El estanque del Buen Retiro sirvió desde la época de Felipe IV para fiestas suntuosas. Uno de los entretenimientos consistía en una cabalgata de grandes carros adornados [que representaban la concha de Venus], que atravesaba las calles de Madrid rumbo a los jardines…Ya en el Buen Retiro, se acercaba la cabalgata al estanque y allí, sobre unas maderas que flotaban en las aguas, la danzarina ejecutaba ante los reyes y la Corte unos bailes clásicos bastante aburridos…Diversión regia en el Madrid de Felipe IV era la lucha entre toros y tigres, toros y elefantes, toros y leones. Esto tenía lugar también en el Buen Retiro.” My translations unless otherwise noted.

8. Morata, 117. “Cada ejecución es una fiesta, y lo importante es tener buen sitio para verlo todo al detalle…El Padre Andrés Manuel da las gracias al rey por haber conmutado la pena de descuartizamiento en vivo por cuatro potros por la de horca y descuartizamiento posterior.”

manner. Nonetheless, the public executions did not suppress the dissatisfaction of the Spaniards who found laughter, hope, and political strategies in the arts, especially theater, producing Spain’s second Golden Age.

King Philip IV not only paid for outside spectacles, but also indulged himself in poetry, painting, theater, dance, and music. The Salón de reinos (Hall of Kingdoms) at El Buen Retiro Palace displayed the largest paintings in the king’s collection. Originally intended for theatrical productions, this hall turned into a throne room designed to impress ambassadors and distinguished members of the courts of Europe. For this purpose, Philip IV commissioned various paintings representing Biblical and mythological scenes with political symbolism that glorified his monarchy. The commissioned painters attest to the influence of Italian aesthetics in Philip IV’s court and his patronage of Italian art in Spain.

Italy and Spain had political liaisons early in the sixteenth century during the reign of Philip II. This partnership extended to the arts. “Philip II’s court had formed close links in artistic activity between Italy and Spain and although these had been maintained in Florentine circles by Bartolomé Carducho, such activity had nonetheless diminished.”10 Philip III did not concern himself with the arts. His focus circled around the protection of his lands, defending the Roman Catholic faith, and fighting wars at sea and in land. Once Philip IV assumed the throne, the focus shifted back to invest in the arts and the exchange of artistic innovations. Art historian Véronique Gerard examined

Philip IV’s artistic inventory and confirmed the payments of the commissions and the exuberant amount of money spent on various paintings.

The accounts for Oñate’s embassy [Ambassador to Rome] in fact include payment of 11,700 giulii for ‘three of the four paintings which Philip IV had ordered to be executed in Rome.’ Domenichino received 10,000 giulii for Salomon and the Queen of Sheba and the Sacrifice of Isaac, Artemisia Gentileschi 1467 giulii and 14 baiocchi for painting Hercules and Omphale in Venice. The transport of these pictures to Madrid cost 233 giulii.\footnote{11}

This evidence contributes to the idea of an Italian presence at Philip IV’s court. The king himself ordered these paintings with the assistance of mediators. Painters such as Guido Reni, Giulio Cesare Procaccini, Artemisia Gentileschi (daughter of Orazio), and Domenichino contributed to the splendor of the Salón de reinos.\footnote{12} Philip IV welcomed Italian aesthetic ideals and used them to restore his monarchy’s vigor and reputation in all of Western Europe. Nonetheless, this influence remained distant. The paintings reflect the king’s love for Italian art, but there was no personal contact between artists.

Philip IV’s art collection began with Philip II who inherited works from his father, Charles V, and his aunt, Mary of Hungary.\footnote{13} Part of this collection included four erotic paintings by Antonio Da Correggio (1489-1534) based on mythology. Federico Gonzaga gave these to the king as a gift. “Their frank sensuality made Philip [II] uneasy, and he

\footnote{11} Ibid., Silver giulii and gold scudi were the currency used in Spain and in various places in Italy. During Philip II’s reign, the powerful Florentine company of Carnesecchi and Strozzi loaned 300,000 gold scudi to Spain who agreed to pay the amount in silver giulii. Carlo M. Cipolla, \textit{Money in Sixteenth-Century Florence} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 75-76.

\footnote{12} Ibid., 9-14.

gave away two of them to his secretary, Antonio Pérez.”¹⁴ Philip’s reaction to the sensuality of these paintings attests to the conservative style of art in Spain and the restraint of the Spanish monarchy during the sixteenth century. Philip II’s patronage of the arts in the sixteenth century helped develop the “art of painting in Spain from a provincial to an international arena.”¹⁵ Philip II centralized the patronage of the arts to the extent that Italian artists moved to Madrid in search of patronage from the king and other local elites in the hope of obtaining fame and glory. This brought a twofold response from Spaniards: first, the local elite families embraced Italian art, following the king’s example, leading to unemployed Spanish artists; second, regional centers suffered economically because they could not compete with Madrid whose artistic culture “revolved around the figure of the king.”¹⁶ Not only was Philip II a great patron of the arts, but the reign of Philip IV brought this artistic vigor back to Madrid. This artistic activity and Philip IV’s love for art “helped to transform Madrid into one of the liveliest art markets in Europe.”¹⁷ Therefore, Philip’s patronage of the arts in the seventeenth century not only restored Madrid’s local reputation, but placed Madrid as a lively commercial center for the arts internationally.

A significant difference between Philip II and Philip IV is that the latter encouraged Spanish painters and did not rely exclusively on Italian artists. Spanish artists

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¹⁴. Ibid., 61.
¹⁵. Ibid.
¹⁶. Ibid.
¹⁷. Ibid., 111.
received employment in the royal court as well as foreigners aiding Philip IV’s attempt to
revitalize his monarchy. The arrangement of the collection of artwork in different rooms
and hallways of the Buen Retiro palace depended on the specific program for the room.
The portraits of the emperors and empresses were displayed together, while the paintings
representing the battles hung interspersed with ten paintings depicting Hercules and his
many feats. These paintings symbolized the kingdom of Spain’s great courage, its many
victories, and its international power. King Philip also wanted a “memorial” room to
display twenty of Rubens’ paintings along with various bronze sculptures and other
Italian work. This room became the Octagonal Room, later renamed the Hall of Mirrors
due to two mirror frames in the shape of double eagles by the sculptor Antonio de
Herrera. Among these Italian paintings, the king included Paolo Veronese’s *Venus and
Adonis* and *Cephalus and Procris*. These two works have received little attention from art
historians. This is understandable due to the numerous paintings acquired by the Spanish
monarchy and the king’s fascination with Rubens. Nonetheless, the two mythological
paintings by Veronese became the subject for the Spaniards first attempts at the Italian
genre of opera. These two paintings merit attention because of their influence outside of
the palace. Veronese’s artwork inspired the writer Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca
(1600-1681) and royal harpist Juan Hidalgo (1614-1685) to compose the first Spanish
opera performed for watershed events in Spain’s political history.
Mythological Art in Philip IV’s Court

Diego Velázquez (1599-1660) bought two mythological paintings by Paolo Veronese during his three-year stay in various cities in Italy. Commissioned by King Philip IV to acquire paintings, sculptures, furnishings, and other decorations for the palace, Velázquez travelled in Italy from 1648 to 1651. Among Velázquez’s purchases were two paintings from circa 1580 inspired by Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, specifically the stories of Venus and Adonis, and Cephalus and Procris. Veronese executed these paintings in the Italian mannerist style. The uncomfortable poses of the main figures, highly stylized facial expressions, bold use of colors, and the unbalanced size of all the elements in the painting expose great emotion and expression from the artist. In *Venus and Adonis*, Veronese depicts Venus in a curved-like figure covering her breasts as a cloth covers her limbs—one of the greatest features of the idealized beauty of women (see fig. 1). Adonis’s body does not rest comfortably on Venus’s lap with one leg supported by the tree and the other on the floor. His limbs reflect little musculature or definition. The sun shines mainly on Venus while the rest of the setting conveys dark colors and shadows. Although there is much to say about this painting, greater attention will be given to *Cephalus and Procris* (see fig. 2). This mythological setting inspired the creation of the Spaniards’ attempt at a full-length, fully-sung opera, *Celos aun del aire matan*, with libretto by Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca and music by Juan Hidalgo.
Figure 1. Paolo Veronese, *Venus and Adonis*, ca. 1580 (Madrid, Museo del Prado).

Figure 2. Paolo Veronese, *Cephalus and Procris*, ca. 1580 (Strasbourg, Musée des Beaux-Arts).
In contrast to *Venus and Adonis*, *Cephalus and Procris* displays somber colors, great depth, and intense emotions in the main characters. Placed side by side, as is assumed they were hung in the Hall of Mirrors, these two painting create a stark contrast. This painting reflects sadness, disillusionment, and death. Procris weeps as she rests on the roots of a tree and listens to Cephalus speak. She glances at the direction he signals to, but her face portrays pain caused by a spear that pierces her abdomen. Her body is covered with the exception of her breasts. One hand caresses the weapon while Cephalus holds the other hand. Veronese painted Cephalus’s body in an uncomfortable position either with one knee holding his body up or lying on his side holding Procris. His face appears flushed yet his hand signaling to the left seems relaxed and explanatory instead of accusatory. His other hand is interlaced with Procris’s. Compared to Cephalus, the hound standing behind him appears huge. This portrays the dog as a dominant character, almost of the same importance as the two bodies in front. Like Procris, the hound is looking at the hand of Cephalus giving the viewer another indication to look in the direction the hand points towards. At the bottom left corner, a woman—representing the adulterous nymph Aura—walks (or runs) away from the scene with a dog resting close to her. The motion in her body, juxtaposed with the stillness of the dog, creates a significant contrast. These two characters are in the shadows while Cephalus and Procris remain in the light. Although Cephalus points in the direction of the woman, his hand appears far above her as if explaining to Procris that he was calling out to the wind hitting the trees rather than to the nymph herself. Veronese’s beautiful depiction of a story in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* displays intense emotion, drama, love, jealousy, and death. To
understand Veronese’s art, it is necessary to summarize briefly Ovid’s narration of Cephalus and Procris.\(^\text{18}\)

**Book VII: Cephalus and Procris (661-865)**\(^\text{19}\)

As he wept remembering the high price he had to pay in order to obtain his spear, Cephalus began to narrate the story about a time when he was married. Surrounded by curious princes who wanted to know about this magical spear that never missed its aim and returned to its master after piercing a fatal wound into its target, Cephalus’s narration began: “Son of the goddess, this weapon makes me weep…” Two months into his happy marriage to Procris, daughter of Erechtheus, the gods influenced the actions of these two leading them to a tragic death. As Cephalus hunted in the woods, the goddess Aurora took him away against his will and tried to seduce him. Cephalus describes Aurora as a perfect dream, but explains that his love for Procris was greater than the temptation. He elaborates on the sacredness of his union to Procris and how she remains in his lips. Aurora was angered by Cephalus’s love for Procris. Furious, Aurora finally released Cephalus. As he returned, Cephalus began doubting the faithfulness of Procris. Her


beauty was great and he had been gone in war for a long period of time, so he decided to
test her loyalty by changing his appearance. Aurora conceded his wish and made him
unrecognizable.

As the disguised Cephalus entered Athens, he struggled to come before the
presence of the daughter of Erechtheus. Once before her, he doubted his intentions and
wanted to tell the truth and kiss her. She looked sad and in wanting, waiting for her
beloved’s return. Nonetheless, still in disguise, he offered her a fortune if she slept with
him for just one night. She did not give in, so he offered even more. When she hesitated
to respond no, Cephalus wrongly accused her of adultery and revealed his true identity.
Procris, ashamed, did not say a word. She fled the scene. Deeply hurt by her husband, she
wandered into Diana’s ways. Cephalus asked for forgiveness and it was granted. As a
gift, Procris gave him a hound named Laelaps who could run faster than the wind, and a
spear who never missed a target. After living in happiness a few more years, rumors got
to Procris ears about Cephalus’s adultery with a nymph named Aura. Cephalus had said
of Aura: “Come to me, delight me, enter my breast, most pleasing one, and, as you do, be
willing to ease this heat I burn with!” The person who told this to Procris did not know
that Cephalus was talking to the wind, aura, not a nymph. Nonetheless, Procris wanted to
confirm the rumors herself and went out to the wilderness and followed her husband
doubting his faithfulness. As was his custom when hunting, Cephalus called out to aura
to relieve his suffering. Procris moaned as she heard his words. She moved and leaves
rattled. Cephalus, thinking that it was a wild creature, threw his spear. She cried out: “Ah,
me!” Recognizing the voice of his wife, Cephalus ran towards her, held her in his arms,
and watched her die as she begged him not to marry Aura and he tried to explain the misunderstanding. Alas, she expired. “The hero, weeping, had told this sorrowful tale…” This is the story of the once happily married couple, Cephalus and Procris, who loved each other so much that they doubted each other’s love.

Cephalus narrated a story of marriage, jealousy, tragedy, and death to explain the sorrow that his spear reminds him of. He paid a high price to hold the spear that never missed its prey and returns loyally to its master. This mythological scene represents one of the few instances in which Ovid gave voice to the memories of a main character. The reader obtains a one-sided story, but this approach allows the reader to delve into the thoughts and emotions of the saddened Cephalus. The reader explores Cephalus’s sorrow as he recalls the story of his happy marriage brought to an end due to jealousy. However, Veronese did not narrate but depicted the story of Cephalus and Procris as described earlier. Although only local elites had access to the Hall of Mirrors in Philip IV’s El Buen Retiro Palace, this mythological setting turned into the Spaniards’ first full-length, fully-sung opera. The story of Cephalus and Procris evolved into Celos aun del aire matan (Jealousy, even of the wind, kills).20 The grandiose and political circumstances that surrounded the performance of this opera suggest what Philip IV intended to portray through this mythological story.

After the Thirty Years’ War ended in 1648, Spain and France continued to fight in Spain, the Italian peninsula, and the Caribbean Sea. The Treaty of Pyrenees of 1659 ended the Franco-Spanish wars as France agreed not to help Portugal. The Spaniards

20. An alternative translation is “Jealousy, even unfounded, kills.”
wanted a marriage to secure the terms agreed upon and the loyalty of France. This resulted in the betrothal of Louis XIV, King of France, to Infanta María Teresa, Philip IV’s daughter, at the Spanish-French border. To commemorate these two important political events for the Spanish monarchy, the king commissioned an operatic performance.21 “According to the chronicle of Jerónimo de Barrionuevo in Madrid, the news of the final adjustment of the peace between Spain and France was officially announced only in April 1661, so the June 1661 production of *Celos aun del aire matan* was most likely mounted in celebration of this announcement and to commemorate the anniversary of the royal wedding.”22 The political circumstances that surrounded the performance of the opera *Celos aun del aire matan* reflect an intentionally political agenda for the king’s patronage of the arts.

**Opera as Royal Entertainment**

In music and theater, Philip IV depended on the Marquis de Eliche for the organization of royal entertainment. Beginning in the 1650s, mythological semi-operas, zarzuelas, and *comedias nuevas* not only served as lavish amusement, but as a political medium to distinguish hierarchical power among social classes.

A mature Philip IV [after his marriage to Mariana of Austria in 1649] recognized the utility of representational art and public spectacle in controlling the opinion of his subjects, ennobling the institution’s monarchy, and legitimizing the powerful. After the crisis of the 1640s and the suspension of theatrical performances, court theater became decidedly more focused in its political


22. Ibid.
application of representing the virtues of the Habsburg dynasty and the superior wisdom of the monarchy’s plans and actions.\(^{23}\)

The Court dramatist Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca and harpist Juan Hidalgo were forced to apply imported forms, ideas, and styles to their creations.\(^{24}\) Calderón de la Barca became a central figure in Spanish literature after the death of the Spanish playwright Lope de Vega (1562-1635). Juan Hidalgo served the court beginning in his teenage years and earned the respect of the king as musician and composer. To inspire and teach them, the Marquis de Eliche employed various Italians to work directly at the palace. Cosimo Lotti, theatrical engineer for Philip IV’s court, cultivated a strong relationship with the Spanish public awing them with extravagant machinery and pompous stage designs fostering an avid appetite for innovation. After Lotti’s death in 1643, the Florentine stage designer Baccio del Bianco produced and supervised the theatrical and musical entertainment of the court utilizing the latest techniques of the Italian taste for grand spectacles. Though his main task involved stage designs and engineering, Del Bianco expressed his opinion about music and what he understood happened with the Italian development of opera. As Stein explains:

The Florentine stage designer, Baccio del Bianco, provided the strongest non-musical connection between the Italian theatrical world and the Spanish court. Not only did Del Bianco work with Calderón on the production of the court plays from 1652 to 1657, but, by his own admission, he was interested in bringing Italian ideas about musical performance in Madrid. He expressed strong opinions on the musical parts of several productions. Further, [his] letters give the impression that, although he was not a musician, he felt his role as the Italian emissary and attempted to counsel both dramatists and composers. Thus, the importation of Italian theatrical practices, including ideas concerning dramatic

\(^{23}\) Stein, *Songs of Mortals*, 129.

\(^{24}\) Ibid., 126-86.
music, was effected mainly through two non-musicians, Rospigliosi and Baccio del Bianco. This is not so unusual, since the spread of opera from the earliest Italian centers often occurred through just such direct and personal envoys.25

Giulio Rospigliosi wrote a play for Madrid to introduce the recitative style to the Spaniards in 1652.26 Unfortunately, only letters mentioning this event survive without reference to the language of the libretto.27 This detail would clarify why the Spaniards did not respond enthusiastically to the revolutionary new style. Nonetheless, Rospigliosi brought the male soprano Ludovico Lenzi to interpret the recitative style.28 Hence, Philip IV and his court had the opportunity to hear this new musical style. Presumably, Calderón and Hidalgo participated in the gatherings and adapted the Italian aesthetics to the conventions of the Spanish musical scheme. These events led to various experiments with the recitative style.

The semi-opera La fiera, el rayo y la piedra (The Fierce, The Ray and The Rock, 1652) with libretto by Calderón de la Barca (and music by an unknown composer) was intended for the birthday celebration of Mariana of Austria. Though the music for the first semi-opera supervised by Del Bianco does not survive, the dramatic text includes indications that specify the use of recitative. Stein states that “Cupido’s monologue in Act 2, beginning ‘Si el orbe de la luna,’ is marked ‘sale Cupido cantando en estilo

25. Stein, Songs of Mortals, 134.
26. Ibid., 133.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
This corroborates the use of recitative style of singing. Evidence not only points to the use of recitative style, but also to the use of the ‘Italian’ meter in seven- and eleven-syllable lines for the dialogue among the gods where Spanish custom demanded the use of octosyllabic verses. Therefore, “the use of recitative in 1652 was undoubtedly the result of Italian influence during Rospigliosi’s time in Madrid.” This experiment with recitative style influenced the emergence of opera in Spain. The presence of Italians in the Spanish court nurtured the implementation of this musical innovation. Furthermore, the king’s desire to lure his guests promoted the spending of great amounts of money to produce the court’s lavish feasts.

Spaniards’ Reception of Opera

After the 1640s, King Philip IV launched opulent celebrations in an attempt to renew Spain’s vigor, relieve bitter experiences, and distract the populace. As Stein concludes, “theatrical performances produced at court but offered as well to the public would be ‘guided spectacles’ to edify, subdue, and above all control the plebeian mass.” The Spaniards did not respond to the king’s lavishness passively. Spain’s second Golden Age grew out of the political turmoil and the economic stress of the people. Writers such as Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616), Lope de Vega, and Calderón de la Barca wrote in

29. Ibid., 135. “Cupid’s monologue in Act 2…is marked ‘Cupid enters singing in recitative style.’” Semi-opera describes a hybrid genre between theater and opera.

30. Stein, Songs of Mortals, 135.

31. Ibid., 136.

32. Ibid., 129.
response to social tensions. Calderón de la Barca presented a singular case where he yielded to the desires of the king to glorify the monarchy, but created parodies related to the same subjects used for royal entertainment. This suggests that the Spaniards rejected the ideas supported by the king for political, not stylistic, reasons. In a period of poverty and political instability, the behavior of the monarchy—spending great amounts of money for the entertainment of foreigners and the élite few—won the enmity of the plebeian mass, which hindered the reception of opera in public theaters.

The consolidation of opera in Spain resulted from the influence of foreigners in Philip IV’s attempt to improve his monarchical status. These productions emanated from political affairs. Florentine diplomats in a private gathering at the king’s court produced the semi-opera *La selva sin amor* in 1629. *La fiera, el rayo y la piedra* performed in 1652, though not a fully sung opera, served as entertainment for the celebration of Mariana of Austria’s birthday. *La púrpura de la Rosa* (1660) and *Celos aun del aire matan* (1660-1) were produced for the festivities surrounding the marriage between Louis XIV of France and Infanta María Teresa of Spain. Hence, the early productions of opera in seventeenth-century Spain all served political purposes. “As both a mirror and critic of society, it is hardly surprising that the new generically hybrid Calderonian court plays were designed to glorify the Spanish Habsburg monarchy and, in some cases, to emphasize that institution’s role as the general leader and protector of Catholic faith.”

Philip IV used this new genre as propaganda of Spain’s elegance, power, and riches.

33. Ibid.

34. Stein, *Songs of Mortals*, 131.
However, the people did not applaud this behavior. Stein states that, “in such a bleak social and political climate [poverty and wars], elaborate palace entertainments were inappropriate, especially when some Spanish moralists considered theater to be damaging to public behavior and to the state.”

The use of recitative style established a musical hierarchy that identified the court’s perception of the monarchy and the role of the people. Only divine characters could converse in song—the divine sung airs to persuade the mortals to obey. Earthly characters were restricted to speech and popular art forms. Musically, the divine characters had powers that no mortal could resist or rebel against.

The audience saw and heard a powerful, elevated élite whose guidance had affected a happy outcome for the mortals. Through mysterious means, often unintelligible to the mortals, the powerful gods administered justice, provided security, and the material and spiritual means for effective social interaction among men. Musical distinctions have reinforced the separation and the interaction of characters throughout the play, so that such intangibles as power, influence, revelation, and social structure have been obvious through music…In the apotheosis, both the powerful and the humble partake of the ultimate good, a social, even universal, harmony that is explicit in the audible concord of musical harmony and the final participation of both gods and men in the musical fabric of the scene.

As a musical technique, recitative style surged from an attempt to enhance the dramatic text surpassing the possibilities of speech and embracing the ideas of ancient Greece. In Spain, recitative style and opera signified political exploitation due to the unrestricted power of the monarchy over its subjects. Philip IV’s use of the arts, especially music, as a

35. Ibid., 127.

political medium hindered the acceptance of Italian influence in the development of opera in Spain.

In 1933, musicologist José Subirá suggested that opera in Spain did not succeed because the people preferred popular songs and theater, which reflected Spain’s national character. In 1981, Jack Sage concluded that Calderón de la Barca and Juan Hidalgo promoted opera and devised a way to integrate Spanish character with this new Italian musical genre. In the 1990s, Louise Stein presented the political context surrounding the first productions of opera in seventeenth-century Spain, shedding light on the nation’s internal conflicts that affected Spanish opera. Nonetheless, she attributes the failure of this genre to musical idioms and artistic expectations of the audience. José María Domínguez, in 2005, stated that Spanish musicology alluded to the Italian influence in the development of opera in Spain, but that the findings were corrupted with “a negative veil of nationalism.” After years of research, Stein contends that the first productions of

37. José Subirá, prologue to Celos aun del aire matan: Ópera del siglo XVII (Barcelona: Institut D’Estudis Catalans, 1933), v-xx.


40. Domínguez, 744.
opera in Spain followed the model of Italy’s musical innovations, but the absence of
stylistic similarities distances one from the other.41

Historical evidence indicates political and artistic ties between Italy and Spain. From the sixteenth century, Florence, Rome, and Naples had liaisons with the Spanish monarchy. In the seventeenth century, Philip IV’s court hired Italians to work in artistic creations at El Buen Retiro Palace in Madrid. The presence of Italian influence on Spain’s musical development is undeniable. Certainly, Spanish artists incorporated Italian aesthetics into their existing rich artistic background. Nonetheless, to fully comprehend the extent of Italy’s influence on Spanish opera, matters of genre and function require attention and further study.

41. Stein, introduction to Celos aun del aire matan, xiv.
Chapter 2

LIBRETTIST AND COMPOSER
Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600-1681), Librettist

Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca stands as one of the greatest Spanish playwrights of the Second Golden Age. Son of an hidalgo (noble), Calderón received higher quality education than his playwright predecessor, Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio (1562-1635). The life of Calderón provides great insight into his writing, specifically his philosophical, religious, and political ideology. Therefore, a brief summary of important events throughout his life guides our understanding of Calderón’s texts.

Calderón de la Barca was born in the year 1600, at a time when Lope de Vega was achieving success in Madrid’s theater scene. Don Diego, Calderón’s father, held an important position as a civil servant in government, giving his son the nobleman title, albeit of low rank. Due to his status, Calderón attended the Jesuit College in Madrid, first known as Colegio Imperial (Imperial College), which offered the best education available in Spain at the time.\(^1\) The Jesuits’ educational purpose focused on disciplining and equipping its students for service to the Church. Don Diego dreamt of priesthood for his son. During his childhood, Calderón “witnessed domestic scenes of stress, strain, and even violence, which had moulded his temperament away from academic intellectualism into the emotions and passions of drama.”\(^2\) At the age of fourteen, Calderón began his canon-law studies at the University of Alcalá.\(^3\) Here, he also enrolled in a two-year art

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2. Ibid.

3. Starting university at the age of fourteen was considered normal in Spain during the 1600s. Parker, 7-10.
course. Soon after, he decided to suspend his studies to tend to his dying father. Don Diego passed away on 21 November 1615. In December of that year, Calderón entered the University of Salamanca, shifting his studies from canon to civil law. Aside from his law studies, Calderón studied logic, philosophy, and theology. Resolved to abandon the pursuit of an ecclesiastical career, Calderón sought after the financial assistance of Constable of Castile, a nobleman of higher rank, during the 1620s. As Lope de Vega is only second to Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) in the Spanish Golden Age of Literature, so is Calderón de la Barca second to Lope de Vega. In 1623, Calderón wrote his first plays following a new genre developed by Lope de Vega—the comedia nueva (New Comedy). This new form of writing, derived from Aristotelian structure, mixed tragedy and comedy in three acts of polymetric verse that emphasized daily-life situations to entertain as well as teach the audience about social norms and values of the time. Calderón’s many plays spoke about honor, a value regarded by the Spanish public as higher than love. After Lope de Vega’s death in 1635, Calderón assumed the title of master of theater with the rising popularity of three of his greatest plays: El príncipe constante (The Steadfast Prince, 1629), La vida es sueño (Life Is a Dream, 1635), and El médico de su honra (The Surgeon of His Honour, 1637). In 1635 Calderón initiated his service to King Philip IV’s court entertainment at the new Palacio del Buen Retiro. A year into his work, the king decorated Calderón with the


5. Lope de Vega, El arte nuevo de hacer comedia en este tiempo, 1609. (New Art of Writing Plays in This Time.)
Commandership of the Military Order of Santiago, which required one year of active war duty. For this reason Calderón fought in during the Revolt of Catalonia in the 1640s until illness impeded him from continuing his service. When he returned from Catalonia in 1642, he worked as secretary for the Duke of Alba where musicologist José Subirá found the first act of *Celos aun del aire matan* in the 1920s.6

While serving the Duke of Alba, Calderón had an illegitimate son whose mother remains unidentified. Supposedly, he married secretly and the new responsibilities to his child influenced his decision in 1651 to return to his ecclesiastical career. Parker concludes that Calderón’s “treatment of love, marriage and women in his plays is based on experience.”7 Before his ordination, Calderón wrote *El jardín de Falerina* (The Garden of Falerina) in 1648 or 1649, which became the first attempt at an opera production following the new art form imported from Italy.8 After returning to a life devoted to the Church to provide for his son, Calderón’s child died at the age of twelve leaving Calderón with a great sense of loss and suffering. This event “denotes that when faced with the loss through death of what one holds most dear there must come the realization that enduring happiness cannot be found in this life.”9 The ecclesiastical career remained the ordained playwright’s priority and most of his writing shifted from secular theater to *autos sacramentales* (sacramental plays) until King Philip IV insisted in


7. Parker, 10.

8. Ibid., 7-10.

9. Ibid., 10.
Calderón’s writing of new court plays. Although never officially appointed court
dramatist, Calderón granted the king’s wishes producing in 1660 a one-act libretto for *La
púrpura de la rosa* (The Crimson of the Rose) with music by Tomás de Torrejón y
Velasco (1644-1728).\(^\text{10}\) Because of the limited duration and development of characters in
*La púrpura de la rosa*, this one-act libretto is not considered the first opera but a
preamble to the second libretto written by Calderón de la Barca. *Celos aun del aire matan*
(Jealousy, Even Unfounded, Kills) with music by Juan Hidalgo consisted of three acts
following the *comedia nueva* structure of Lope de Vega, but with fully-sung dialogue
incorporating the Italian style.

From his education to personal experiences, Calderón’s life shaped the subject of
his writings, the mythological stories selected, and the moral lessons offered to the
public. As one analyzes Calderón’s texts, from the merging of his academic pursuits and
emotional passions, his art speaks of Spain, its selfish king, and its suffering people.
“Calderón’s life presented every aspect of the society of his age…; the religious,
ecclesiastical aspect and the intellectual, almost academic aspect, not to speak of the
sophisticated minority entertainment of opera.”\(^\text{11}\) In Calderón’s particular case, it seems
impossible to separate the artist from his art.

\(^{10}\) Ibid.

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
Political Ideology

In his biography of Calderón de la Barca Cruickshank states “that the facts of authors’ lives and the events they lived through as they wrote, can help us interpret their texts.” This is true, not only for personal events, but political ones as well. Throughout Calderón’s career political pressures limited his artistic output. Through lavish entertainment, the king’s court utilized the arts to bring glory to the monarchy and to teach social norms. Therefore, “an understanding of the complex symbiosis between art and power is essential to any critical evaluation of the court plays that Pedro Calderón de la Barca wrote for the Spanish Habsburg courts of Felipe IV and Carlos II between 1635 and 1680.” Though the historical and political climate of Spain in the seventeenth century was discussed in the previous chapter, one must remember the rise of absolutism in the Spanish monarchy. The previous kingdoms, filled with war and failures, suffered greatly in the eyes of the people and other European monarchies. King Philip IV’s resolution to display grandeur, power, riches, and his ability as a leader led him to incorporate the arts into his propaganda. Artists could suffer death if not in agreement with the king’s wishes and laws. Therefore, absolutism ruled the stage as well as the people.

Madrid rose as the official capital of Spain in the 1560s and became a metropolis soon after, attracting aristocratic families from all over Europe and artists seeking work.

12. Cruickshank, xiii.
14. Ibid.
opportunities. The city evolved rapidly into the center stage of Spain and “the life of Madrid revolved round the actual palace in which the king resided.”¹⁵ The king’s presence in the various artistic shows at the court became a central element of the spectacles themselves. The king’s approval and satisfaction determined the success of the artist. As Parker explains, “while the corruption of government by favorites and their fall from power was the immediate historical context when Calderón began to write plays, the tradition of speaking without telling with implied advice or reproaches to king and ministers was the established background to playwriting.”¹⁶ For this reason, Calderón used historical settings to communicate analogies for the king in his dramas and mythologies to create parallels of the moral and abstract realities of society. Therefore, although Calderón’s texts seem distant and void of emotions, his challenge dwells in the creation of tragicomedy that instructs the people as well as its king in a most respectful manner. These “plays for sovereigns are living stories, which without speaking directly to them must instruct them so respectfully that it should be their own reason that takes need of what they see, and not the dramatist who explains it. Who can doubt that great art is needed for this speaking without telling?”¹⁷ Calderón’s accomplishments as a playwright rest in his ability to portray the unspoken realities of the people. Through his writing he would admonish the king without insulting or belittling him in the presence of his royal

¹⁵. Parker, 241.

¹⁶. Parker, 248.

subjects. He achieved this by merging the *comedia nueva* with his philosophical and religious ideas. Calderón provides “insight into history as the stage on which humanity struggles for its salvation.”18 He presents a new art form in which “the pressure is not toward spiritualizing the physical, but toward embodying and sensualizing the moral and abstract.”19

Calderón did not necessarily agree with the actions of King Philip IV, but during his career he could not suggest that the king behaved unjustly or immorally.20 The people expected the king’s private life to resemble that of Christ. Spain had risen as the defender of the Roman Catholic faith and the king had to present himself as righteous and just before his people. He was to be a living example of the Christian religion. Hence, the king had the authority to dismiss all things that hindered his reputation before his subjects. Calderón’s intellectual astuteness benefited his writing as he used parallel structures in his plays.21 This intellectualism satisfied the need to speak without telling. However, as Parker explains, this concept was misunderstood:

Calderón has long been thought a dramatist concerned with abstract problems, and therefore remote from the real world of human passions and conflicts. The realization that history is a formative element in the elaboration of his themes through his special technique of allusions, analogies, and contrasts, may help to right the balance.22

18. Parker, 281-82.
22. Ibid., 325.
Calderón did not distance himself from the reality of the suffering, political abuse, and poverty of Madrid, but used alternate settings to convey the lessons to the king without insulting him.

Throughout Calderón’s artistic output, “history is indeed present in his drama with the past brought to bear on the problems of the present, suggesting possible solutions in the light of historical experience.” Historical settings, mythological tales, and moral lessons summarize Calderón’s plays, which all bring forth his dissatisfaction with King Philip IV without directly accusing the court and endangering his own life because of the disapproval of the king. Calderón proves to stand the test of a king’s great ego.

**Theatrical legacy**

After Lope de Vega’s death in 1635, Calderón published successful plays. *La vida es sueño, El médico de su honra, and El príncipe constante* were published during the 1630s and they all convey lessons of honor. As Lope de Vega had written in his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* in 1609, two topics dominate the Spanish stage: love and honor. Calderón emphasized honor in any and every character over love. In the 1650s, though never appointed court dramatist, Calderón started writing court plays. *Celos aun del aire matan* is one of seventeen mythological plays Calderón wrote over the course of his lifetime.

23. Ibid.

24. Greer, 5.
Through his mythological plays, Calderón established his legacy of Renaissance humanism. Though mythology served as political propaganda and an expression of the absolute power of the king, Calderón used mythology to present Spain’s reality while satisfying the king’s aesthetic demands. These performances taught the Spaniards the levels of social hierarchy and their place in it. This idea of the king as god dates back to the third century before Common Era with the Sicilian writer Ephemeris. His theory consisted of the belief that mythological gods were kings idealized by their people to the point of deification. Therefore, the king would be interpreted as a god in the mythological settings with divine authority over his kingdom. In these comedias, the song structure and versification would vary according to the social class of the character. For example, the king spoke about wisdom, justice, and truth in a sophisticated, serious language, while the villain would use common syntax and idioms. The playwrights used different meters to allow the flexibility of decorum according to social strata. If the actors were to sing, they would also sing according to their social class.

The Count-Duke of Olivares (1587-1645), one of the king’s favorites and adviser, “employed theatrical events to enhance the power of the king’s image for domestic and foreign consumption.” Because Philip IV ascended to the throne at the young age of sixteen, the Count-Duke of Olivares Gaspar de Guzmán y Pimental advised the king in political and artistic affairs. Olivares encouraged King Philip IV to grow in knowledge of

27. Ibid., 12.
literature, languages, philosophy, and the arts, among other subjects. Due to his efforts King Philip IV developed an exquisite taste for contemporary art and a growing desire for amusement. Furthermore, Olivares brought Italians to court to introduce the new genre of opera. Calderón and Juan Hidalgo had the task of adapting the Italian musical style for the Spanish public while exalting the king and his monarchy. As Parker explains, “the development of the court theatre in both the Alcázar and the Retiro was directed to producing theatrical spectacles that were conceived as elaborate homages to the king.”

The aristocratic families of Europe were interested in this new Italian genre and expected to be entertained upon their arrival to Spain. King Philip IV sought grandeur, not poetry. Cosimo Lotti (1571-1643), the Italian architect brought by Olivares to assist in the court plays, had greater authority than Calderón de la Barca, the librettist. Visual spectacle, extreme machinery, and special effects dominated the stage and clouded the text. “The enthusiasm of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century princes and less exalted spectators for these spectacular effects usually worked to the detriment of the play as a dramatic text, for the power and glory afforded to the architect [Cosimo Lotti] exceeded the control of the playwright.” Nonetheless, Calderón refused to give up entirely the control of the production of his plays. Calderón believed that the poetry of the text must be


29. Parker, 330.

30. Greer, 15.

31. Ibid.
understood. From the start, he demonstrated his interest in the preservation of the art, not only showcasing the engineers’ ability, but integrating every aspect of the spectacle as much as possible. Nonetheless, even with all of his adaptations to the Italian opera, the genre remained an imported one that did not succeed with the public and only entertained the rich and powerful.

The Spanish scholar and literary critic Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1857-1912) considered mythological drama an inferior play. As a product of the national and realistic school of thought from the nineteenth century, Menéndez y Pelayo focused on the distant historical context of Calderón’s plays and the abstractness of mythology. “Calderón, however, justifies his use of mythology in the *autos* by pointing to the numerous parallels between the fables and the Bible, because renaissance mythographers had more than an inkling of comparative anthropology.” Not only in the *autos sacramentales*, but in Calderón’s theatrical legacy, mythology served as a medium to speak without telling. Mythological fables provided the characters and scenes to present realities of Spain without mentioning particular names. The political atmosphere where Calderón worked should not be forgotten, but understood in order to grasp the incredible art Calderón developed. “What matters is that Calderón believed that mythology belonged, although remotely, to the revelation of Scripture, which meant that he was sufficiently respectful of the ancient deities to utilize them as allegories for his

32. Ibid., 54.
33. Ibid., 3.
34. Parker, 340.
Eucharistic plays.” Calderón appropriated two seemingly opposing storylines to depict one reality—the one observed in the king’s court.

Olivares succeeded in creating the image of the “Planet King,” in contrast with King Louis XIV of France (r. 1643-1715) who was commonly referred to as the “Sun King.” The importation of opera and the grand spectacles helped raise the status of the Spanish kingdom to that of other European monarchies. Calderón, with the task of adapting the Italian genre to Spanish customs, combined poetry, music, dance, and scenery into beautifully conceived art. His seventeen mythological dramas stand as proof of his success in creating this new craft. Nonetheless, the political climate of the time, the public conception of the genre, and the nationalistic movement promoted its failure. The close relationship between art and power excluded Calderón’s work from critical analysis, while Lope de Vega’s authentic people’s drama was favored by the Spanish public. This brief outline of Calderón’s life, political situation, and theatrical output provides an holistic framework about the historical context of the playwright and his astuteness in the creation of a new form of art in which he could convey his political ideology without offending King Philip IV while adapting Lope de Vega’s comedia nueva.

35. Ibid., 342.
36. Greer, 3.
Music in Spain and Composer Juan Hidalgo (1614-1685)

The political reality of Spain during the seventeenth century not only affected Calderón de la Barca’s texts, but shaped the music of this period. As Stein states, “the close alignment between Church and State in Spain, together with royal religious policies, led to a special and carefully designed musical conservatism.”37 Philip II saw himself as the protector of the Roman Catholic faith and, in the spirit of the Counter Reformation, the arts had to preserve and exalt the law of the Church. However, with the king’s death in 1598, the music of seventeenth-century Spain changed.

New textures and techniques were developed within vernacular religious genres, whose overtly expressive style included sections of homophony and solo song along with imitative counterpoint. As the seventeenth century progressed, Spanish society was specially desirous of the novelty, invention, enigma, artifice, and magnificent spectacle that scholars tend to associate with the culture of the Baroque. Great formal flexibility, bold contrasts, clear harmonic organization, sensitive text expression, and careful attention to text declamation are notable characteristics of Spanish music from the mid-seventeenth century, whether in large-scale sacred pieces for one or more choirs, romances for two or three voices, solo setting of romances, or clever theatrical songs with improvised accompaniment.38

The musical material created by composers circulated quickly through oral tradition, but was also readily available for all social classes. Much of this music, however, does not specify a composer, pointing to the people’s view of musicians.

The fact that Spanish musicians left behind very few accounts of their lives, performances, or ideas concerning music, is a direct result of the musician’s place in society and an important statement about how musicians were viewed and


perceived themselves. Composers and performers were servants and artisans employed by the court, the Church, or the municipal theater in the largest cities. Professional composers did not come from the upper reaches of society, and even the best could not rise to that level. Even at the royal court, opportunities for individual fame were restricted, and the names of composers and performers were only rarely given in the printed descriptions of royal entertainments or in the accounts of court copyist. 39

Due to the lack of written evidence of the life of musicians, little information has survived about the composer Juan Hidalgo and his contribution to the development of music in the seventeenth century. 40 Nonetheless, some extant manuscripts provide a foundation to understand the court’s expectation for royal entertainment and the people’s response to the changes implemented.

According to Stein, “within the humanist tradition, Spanish musicians were among the first to recognize and promote the view that music and words to be sung should coexist in a close relationship.” 41 The Spanish friar and theorist Juan Bermudo (1510-1565) encouraged composers to imitate the text as much as possible in his treatise Declaración de instrumentos (1555). “The composer who wishes to compose correctly must first understand the texts, and make it so that the music serves the text, and not the text the music. For the music must be made according to the text, and not the text for the


40. Ibid., 455. “...two of the largest collections of music by court composers were lost through natural disasters: in the fire that destroyed the royal library and music archive of the Royal Palace in Madrid known as the Alcázar in 1734, and in the earthquake of 1755 that took with it the great library of King John IV of Portugal. Most of the surviving musical sources are undated, and printed ones are scarce, limited to a handful of practical or theoretical manuals, especially for organ, guitar, or harp.”

41. Ibid. 436.
sake of music.” This continues as the standard practice for Spanish musicians into the early seventeenth century. Composers displayed mastery in enhancing the text even in the most complex passages of their music. Hence, Spanish musicians practiced the art of complementing the text with music before the turn of the seventeenth century. One of the composers who succeeded in his native land was Juan Hidalgo (1614-1685). Due to the reasons mentioned before, little information of him is found. A detailed biography of this important composer is a project that merits attention. Nonetheless, a limited outline of his life and musical output sheds light into his relationship with Calderón de la Barca and his role in the development of a Spanish opera.

**Biography of Juan Hidalgo**

Born fourteen years after Calderón de la Barca, Hidalgo became a harpist for the Spanish royal chapel in the 1630s in his teenage years. He served as accompanist to both sacred and secular music. He joined the court’s chamber musicians in 1645 and soon became a leading composer. Though he enjoyed a great deal of popularity during his lifetime, few documents about his life exist today and research on this influential composer of the seventeenth century is scarce. Stein states that “his music was known in

42. Juan Bermudo, *Declaración de instrumentos musicales* (Osuna, Spain, 1555), fol. 125; quoted in Borgerding and Stein, 436. “...one should imitate as far as possible in his composition everything that is said in the text. When setting *Clamavit Jesu voce magna* one should compose a rising line where it says *voce magna*; for *Martha vocavit Marian sororem suam silentio* the music should become lower for the word *silentio* so that it can scarcely be heard...Wherever there is an idea that commands attention such notes should be put down so that in everything they are very much in agreement with the text.” Borgerding and Stein, 436.

43. Borgerding and Stein, 437.
Italy and France, and his theatrical songs were heard not only in Madrid but also in revival productions elsewhere in Spain and Latin America.”

Certainly, Juan Hidalgo is a crucial figure in Spain’s musical legacy.

His influence in the emergence of opera could be compared to that of Henry Purcell (1659-1695) in Britain and Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) in France. He not only composed sacred pieces, but also the music for two fully-sung operas, many partly-sung zarzuelas, and semi-operas. His collaboration with Calderón de la Barca for the production of Celos aun del aire matan portrays his significant role in the merging of Italian ideas with Spanish customs. For example, the Spanish theater included popular music styles such as bailes, romances, and villancicos, while Italian opera called for recitative style for a fully-sung dialogue. Juan Hidalgo tried to incorporate the musical styles used in the comedia nueva while adjusting Italian techniques to suit Spanish tastes. However, the Spanish people did not understand why the characters always spoke in song. Since Lope de Vega’s comedias, the Spanish public enjoyed verisimilitude in the theater. The recitative style did not conform to this aesthetic. Musical examples will be seen in Chapter 3. Because aristocratic circles desired grand spectacles, impressive machinery, and visual effects the drama and music were undermined. The people of Spain viewed opera as an imported genre with little resemblance to every day life, hence, not appealing. Nonetheless, Juan Hidalgo and Calderón continued their quest for a national opera style, partly because the king demanded it.

Relationship between Calderón de la Barca and Juan Hidalgo

Calderón de la Barca, as librettist, controlled a great part of the decisions regarding opera. Versification influenced musical meter, and different types of characters demanded a particular style of music. Calderón and Hidalgo partnered in zarzuelas and semi-operas before working on Celos aun del aire matan, which suggests that they knew their styles and communicated effectively. Hidalgo is thought to have approached the composition of Celos aun del aire matan by imitating Italian opera, a genre brought to Spain by the Count-Duke of Olivares. Stein argues that this is not the case.

During Hidalgo’s years as principal court composer, the strongest Italian influence upon Spanish court plays could be seen in the visual effects created by Roman and Florentine stage designers. But the absence of Italianate affective musical devices or gestures, as well as formulaic strophic bass patterns in Hidalgo’s airs, distances them stylistically from the practices of contemporary Italian composers.45

Certainly, Hidalgo did not employ Italianate affective musical devices into his compositions in part because Spain already had its own way of creating affect and enhancing the text through the music. Also, versification varied considerably from Italy because of the difference in language. Although Stein believes that the Italian influence can be seen strongly in the visual aspects of opera, she does not completely invalidate the idea of Italian influence in the music. The stylistic differences represent Hidalgo and Calderón’s experimentation in their quest to develop a form of opera that would satisfy the Spanish people, specially the king. An analysis of the philosophical and theoretical foundation for their artistic decisions sheds light on Italy’s influence in the creation of

45. Stein, Celos aun del aire matan, xiv.
this opera. Hidalgo’s “elegant manifestation of the Iberian tradition of secular song” and
his “exploitation of musical forms, styles, and natively Spanish genres in Celos aun del
aire matan” united with the mythological and intellectual writing of Calderón de la Barca
led to a fascinating synthesis and to the emergence of Spanish opera.46

46. Ibid., xiv-v
Chapter 3

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ITALY’S STILE RECITATIVO

AND SPAIN’S RECITADO
Philosophical and Theoretical Foundation of Italian and Spanish Opera

Opera’s artistic value arguably lies in the combination of poetry, music, and drama to the extent that one cannot succeed without the other. Starting in Italy in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, this innovative genre spread to Germany, England, France, Spain, and the New World. The inclusion of various musical forces and styles such as chorus, duets, arias, and ritornellos created a varied and entertaining spectacle. This study focuses primarily on the recitative. The philosophical and theoretical foundation for the Italian *stile recitativo* is juxtaposed with the philosophical and theoretical background of Spain’s *recitado*. Though these two forms of recitative have similar roots and practices, Louise K. Stein argues that Spain’s *recitado* varied considerably from the Italian *stile recitativo* and “owes little to Italian recitative.”¹ A comparative analysis of the philosophical ideas Italians and Spaniards shared, and an examination of meter, versification, and harmony in selected recitatives from the Spanish opera *Celos aun del aire matan* sheds light on the influence of the Italian musical art form in the creation and evolution of Spanish opera.

Opera’s antecedents consisted of verse interspersed with music, madrigal cycles, and pastoral, allegorical or mythological intermedii. The gestation of opera took several years, as composers and librettists experimented with the available resources and constructed new ones to satisfy their intellectual ideals and the public’s artistic taste. The “erudite musical scholar,” as Claude V. Palisca describes him, Girolamo Mei (1519-1594)

studied the history of Greek theater, particularly tragedy.\textsuperscript{2} Through his studies, Mei concluded that Greek tragedies were entirely sung. Although Mei lived in Rome, he communicated constantly with Florentine gentlemen, specially Giovanni Bardi (1534-1612) and Vincenzo Galilei (ca. 1520-1591). Galilei used information from Girolamo Mei to write his treatise \textit{Dialogo della musica antica, et della moderna} in 1581.

Wanting to foster the exchange of ideas, Giovanni Bardi convened a series of informal gatherings, where science, the arts, and literature were discussed. These meetings began in 1573 with Giulio Caccini (1551-1618), Pietro Strozzi (1510-1558), and Galilei as regular attendees. In the 1600s, Caccini referred to this group of noblemen as Bardi’s \textit{Camerata}. Now commonly known as the Florentine Camerata, the group is thought to have dissolved by 1592, but the ideas discussed had significant impact on the history of music. Jacopo Corsi (1561-1602), one of Galilei’s patrons, was interested in the practical application of Galilei’s theoretical writings, and together with librettist Ottavio Rinuccini (1562-1621) and singer Jacopo Peri (1561-1633) they created a pastoral in \textit{stile rappresentativo} titled \textit{Dafne}, performed in 1598. These experiments led to the production of \textit{Le musiche sopra L’Euridice} by Jacopo Peri (Florence, 1600), \textit{L’Euridice} by Giulio Caccini (Florence, 1600), and \textit{L’Orfèo} by Claudio Monteverdi (Mantua, 1607).\textsuperscript{3}

Through these productions musicologists have traced the evolution of opera as we know it today. In Jacopo Peri’s \textit{L’Euridice} based on the libretto by Ottavio Rinuccini for

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the wedding of Maria de’ Medici to King Henry IV of France, the stile recitativo is introduced.


Peri created this idiom by writing long held notes for the basso continuo allowing the singer to move freely simulating the natural inflections and rhythmic variations that occur as emotions fluctuate. Throughout the opera, Peri harmonized the melodic lines following the circle of fifths creating musical interest and forward motion. In Example 1, D-G-C represent the first example of the circle of fifths Peri expanded to include B-flat and F leading back to C and reversing the order to C-G-D. This harmony builds an accelerated pace, but Peri’s melodic writing lacks forcefulness and emotion. The vocal line moves in stepwise motion with a limited range of an octave. Although there are some instances of melodic interest, such as in “Deh, come lieta ascolta i dolci canti,” Peri’s experiments do not incorporate much declamation in his stile recitativo keeping his example too lyrical to represent speech in song. On the other hand, Caccini composes a static harmonic line where Euridice sings with a triadic melodic contour and repeated eighth notes in the limited range of a fifth in the selected measures (see example 2). With these resources, Caccini’s compositional writing resembles declamation and natural speech although it is hindered by poor harmonic interest.

These examples reflect the experimental stage of opera. Peri and Caccini implemented the techniques they knew in an effort to create something new. Instead of competing against one another for recognition in the 1600s, Peri and Caccini could have worked together to combine the former’s harmonic language with the latter’s elegant and declamatory melodic lines. Claudio Monteverdi applied Peri and Caccini’s ideas and developed them further conceiving the opera L’Orfeo performed in 1607.

Monteverdi’s *La favola d’Orfeo* is considered the first opera due to its length, the development of the characters, the size of the orchestra and range of instrumental forces, and the general musical interest of the work. Arias, recitative, chorus, instrumental ritornellos, and duets represent some of the forms Monteverdi employed for his first operatic masterpiece. Palisca states, “this enumeration of the forms and styles contained in *Orfeo* and their sources shows that there existed no distinctive dramatic style at this time but only an aggregation of many current and older styles.”

5. Ibid.
Peri and Caccini, experimented with various resources trying to find an adequate way to express his ideas. This early opera included an early form of stile recitativo. The concept of a speech-like, single melodic line accompanied by figured bass emerged out of the study of ancient Greek music where this simplistic approach of imitating the natural rhythmic and melodic inflations of the voice portrayed the passions and varying emotions. The melodic line aided the declamation of poetry. Palisca states that stile recitativo’s “essential novelty was that it navigated the straits between speech rhythm and measured rhythm, and between free dissonance and triadic harmony. For, in recitative, melodic declamation was at once free from and controlled by harmony and measured rhythm.” In speech, changes of temper or emotions create rhythmic imperfections and melodic variations that allow the listener to identify mood swings and alterations. To achieve this musically, composers had to explore harmony and meter to conceive an alluring yet realistic spectacle that entertained the audience. For example, Palisca mentions that a “true return to Greek practice would have been unpalatable to musicians around 1600, because it would have meant discarding the Western tradition of regularly measured rhythm and the recently mastered triadic harmony.” Therefore, Monteverdi had to adapt Greek aesthetics to his modern practice. He achieved it by demonstrating his dominance of triadic harmony, using dissonances in cadential movements, and enhancing the poetry by maintaining the integrity of the text and capturing rhythmically the natural expressiveness that it would evoke.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., 30.
EXAMPLE 3. Claudio Monteverdi, L’Orfeo, Act II, mm. 219-226.

As Orfeo delivers the tragic line “Tu se’ morta,” in Act II, Monteverdi emphasizes Orfeo’s distress by using extreme dissonances (see example 3). These instances fall on short rhythmic values and quickly enunciated syllables leading to consonance, a theoretical practice that agrees with Peri’s. The word “sei” begins all these dissonances: first an F-sharp leading to a G in measure 220, followed by a G-sharp leading to an A in measure 221, and again four consecutive F-sharp’s in measure 224 and 225 leading to a G. In this melodic line, the dissonances enhance the text by underlining Orfeo’s despair as he suffers the death of his beloved wife Euridice. In these experimentations with opera, Monteverdi pushed the limits of consonance and dissonance accepted by his contemporaries. He would continue to work on these ideas perfecting and explaining them in the prologue to his Eighth Book of Madrigals, Madrigali guerrieri et amorosi, of 1638.

In his unquenchable quest for new ideas, Monteverdi returned to the writings of Plato and found that composers had explored the “soft” and “moderate” passions, but not
the “agitated” or “warlike” emotions. This led to his publication of various madrigals where he explored with rhythm developing the *stile concitato* using the following formula: divide a *semibreve* into sixteen *semicrome* and strike “one after the other” combining this with “words expressing anger and disdain.” From his first opera in 1607 to the publication of these madrigals in 1638 and his later works such as *L’Incoronazione di Poppea* in 1643, Monteverdi evolves displaying an educational and experimental process in his compositions. Nonetheless, through his artistic development Monteverdi remained steadfast to the idea of music as an enhancement of the text and music’s ability to move the emotions. Although this evolution of compositional techniques arguably does not have a parallel in Spain, the ideas related to the emergence of opera in Spain can be related to those of Italy.

Friar Juan Bermudo (ca. 1510-ca. 1565) wrote the *Declaración de instrumentos musicales* in 1555. This treatise contains six major sections. In the first section, Bermudo speaks about the meaning and purpose of music. Amidst the meetings of the Council of Trent and the Counter Reformation, this Spanish friar felt the need to justify his endeavor and the importance of music in the Church and society. The second section serves as an introduction to music for amateurs. Sections three, four, and five focus on music theory and performance. Bermudo defines concepts such as organum,


9. Ibid.

counterpoint, and bajo cifrado (figured bass) and instructs on how to properly compose using these techniques. These three sections alone represent 176 chapters, and the 
Declaración de instrumentos musicales is more than 300 pages long. Bermudo explained clearly and exhaustively what he understood was the proper use of music. This religious man included in his treatise a sonnet dedicated to the late Don Francisco de Zúñiga, Count of Miranda. The sonnet praises music and the treatise Bermudo wrote:

The indomitable hands that put
the walls of Troy in great fear:
a vice tamed them with his song,
when the sonorous strings they saw.
The oak trees from their seat moved
entrapped by the rhythm of the sweet cry,
that Orpheus sang, and so many of them come
that with an opaque shadow they covered him.\(^{11}\)

The sonnet Bermudo chose for the beginning of his treatise depicts Orpheus’s power through music. Orpheus’s sweet song makes the walls of Troy tremble and submit to his power; the oak trees uproot themselves and move to the beat of Orpheus’s song protecting him and providing him with shade. Orpheus does not only possess power over humans, but also over nature. The sonnet continues by stating that music has the power to control the emotions, that it is divine, comes from the heavens and, if mixed with any corruption or poison, its purity could be destroyed. A friar’s use of mythology to legitimize music in the Church might seem surprising, but it was common practice during

\(^{11}\) Bermudo, Declaración de instrumentos musicales. Las manos indomables que ponían / a los muros de Troya gran espanto: / un vicio las domaba con su canto, / cuando las cuerdas sonoras mal berían. / Los robles de su asiento se movían / rraydos por el son del dulce llanto, / que Orpeho esra haziendo, y llegan tanto / que con opaca sombra le cubrian. (Spanish-English translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.)
this time; the Catholic Church embraced the arts as a means to teach morality and responsibility to the population. Bermudo advocated the idea of music’s power to move the emotions and lead humans toward God. As a friar, religious music was of utmost importance to him. In his treatise he stated, “The invention of the arts (that imitates creation) is good: and for a good purpose.” Music served a good purpose as long as it imitated creation. Through music, people “still on earth would enjoy heaven.” His use of Orpheus to demonstrate the extent of music’s power reminds one of Monteverdi’s prologue to L’Orfeo where Music speaks of its virtues and powers. Although evidence of Monteverdi’s L’Orfeo performed in Spain has not yet been found, the Spanish playwrights Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca hint at the Spaniards knowledge of aesthetic changes happening in other artistic centers.

Bermudo died before Galilei’s treatise was published and other Italians began experimenting with recitative, but Lope de Vega (1562-1635) lived through the beginning stages of the development of opera. Lope de Vega’s poetic treatise Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo (New Art of Writing Plays in This Time), written in 1609 and read before the Academia de Madrid, speaks about the creation of a new form of theater that satisfies the public’s palate. He promotes verisimilitude and the staging of quotidian situations. It is through this writing that musicologists, like Stein, have built their

14. Ibid., “aun estando en la tierra, gozarán del cielo.”
argument of a recitative style created with little influence from the Italian counterpart.

For example, Stein states that in Lope de Vega’s comedias music served a structural purpose to “create, enhance, or prolong the mood or emotional content of a scene.”¹⁵ In the comedias, newly composed music was not necessary. Well-known songs were used with different lyrics to enhance the public’s association with the action on stage. In other words, music occupied a secondary role in the comedias. Notwithstanding Lope de Vega’s view of music, popular song structures like balladas and villancicos where used by composer Juan Hidalgo to represent the social strata of the character that we singing. The gods would sing recitatives with sophisticated vocabulary and much eloquence while the plebeians sang with idiomatic language and common melodic tunes. Although in a negative tone, Lope de Vega’s discourse sheds light into the Spaniard’s evolving view of music and its importance in theater.

Lope de Vega does not clearly reference Italy or other political powers of the time, but Calderón de la Barca does. In his loa (prologue) to La púrpura de la rosa (The Crimson of the Rose, 1660) Calderón de la Barca explains why he attempts to write the libretto for a Spanish opera. This opera is the predecessor of Celos aun del aire matan. Just as King Philip IV had two of Veronese’s paintings in his palace, one depicting Venus and Adonis, and another one Cephalus and Procris, Calderón wrote two libretti. His first

attempt at opera resulted in a one-act libretto, “more like a skeleton than a living body.” As O’Connor rightly points out, Calderón had to adjust the way he structured his plays, the development of his characters, and the language used to write an opera libretto. Due to the hurried manner in which this opera was conceived, the result was not as well-developed as the second libretto Celos aun del aire matan. La púrpura de la rosa is similar to Peri’s and Caccini’s first attempts at opera: short in length, little character development, and lack of musical interest. For this reason, Celos aun del aire matan, as Monteverdi’s L’Orfeo, is considered the first Spanish opera. The loa of La púrpura de la rosa states:

[Vulgo:] por señas de que ha de ser / by signs that must be
toda musica, que intenta / all music, to try
introducir este estilo, / to introduce this style
porque otras Naciones vean / for other Nations to see
competidos sus primores / their skills vied

Through this loa, Calderón states that the endeavor to produce an opera comes for the purpose to demonstrate the Spaniards’ ability in the skills developed by other Nations. Although there is not a direct reference to Italy, and it could also be a reference to France in this political context, the composer Juan Hidalgo explicitly uses italianate verse, meter, and musical qualities that point to an Italian influence in the conception of opera in Spain. Calderón de la Barca’s attempt to write opera libretti, which O’Connor states it a “bold departure from Spanish tradition,” stands as evidence of the importance of Italian influence in the emergence of opera in Spain.17

17. Ibid., 306.
Evidence of a performance of Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo* in Spain has not yet been found, but through Calderón de la Barca’s writing it is evident that the Spaniards knew about the artistic development of Italy and that this knowledge encouraged Spanish artists to restructure or reinvent their arts. From Girolamo Mei in Italy to Bermudo, Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca in Spain, the philosophical idea of the power of music prevails. The use of the mythological hero, Orpheus, whose musical ability and sweet voice allowed him to charm all things, appears in Italy and Spain. These two writers of the sixteenth century, Bermudo and Mei, used Orpheus’s story to exalt the power of music to move the emotions and to caution the people about it. In Bermudo’s treatise, he encouraged composers to preserve the purity of the music by imitating creation. In Girolamo Mei’s study of ancient Greek theater he found that the ancient traditions used speech-like melodies in order to enhance the text and to portray emotions. From the sixteenth century, a philosophical thread is evident between these two geographically distant places. It is through Calderón de la Barca’s *loa* to *La púrpura de la rosa* that evidence of the Spaniards’ knowledge of Italian musical developments is found.

With the aforementioned philosophical groundwork in Italy and Spain, dramatists and composers sought after techniques that would satisfy the public’s taste. Through a process of trial and error, artists experimented with the available resources and created new ones. An examination of meter and verse in Italy’s *stile recitativo* and Spain’s *recitado* sheds light about the extent of Italy’s influence in the emergence of opera in Spain.
Literary and Musical Analysis of Spain’s *Recitado* in *Celos aun del aire matan* (1661)

In 1627, Philip IV’s court was introduced to the Italian genre of opera with the production of *La selva sin amor* (The Forest without Love), a one-act libretto by Lope de Vega with music by Filippo Piccinini (1575-1648) and Bernardo Monanni. Although performed in Spanish, this opera was brought from Florence with little involvement of Spaniards. Twenty-five years later, Baccio di Bianco and Giulio Rospigliosi convinced the Spaniards to experiment with the Italian style. In *La fiera, el rayo y la piedra* (1652), Calderón de la Barca experimented with the italianate poetic meter of seven- and eleven-syllable lines for the recitatives. In this partly sung drama, only the gods sang in recitative style. The libretto for this work does not survive. *Celos aun del aire matan* represents the first fully sung opera written and performed by Spaniards in the 1660s.

Louise K. Stein argues that “Spanish *recitado*, which emerged around the middle of the seventeenth century, owes little to Italian recitative.” She states that Spanish composers used triple meter in order to accommodate the accentuation patterns of eight-syllable lines, similar to Spanish *romances*, contrary to the seven- and eleven-syllable lines used in Italy set in duple meter. Nonetheless, in Act 1 of *Celos aun del aire matan* there is evidence of italianate versification and duple meter.

In Example 4, Calderón de la Barca uses hepta- and hendecasyllable lines for Pocris’s recitative. In Spanish grammar, words that stress the last syllable and end in the

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19. Ibid., “Abstract.”
vowels “n” or “s” are accentuated. These are called *palabras agúdas*. In poetry, if the last word of the verse is *agúda*, one must add one syllable count to the line (+1). If the word has three syllables and the stress is on the first syllable one must subtract one syllabic count (-1). These are called *palabras esdrújulas*. When a word ends in a vowel and is followed by a word that starts in a vowel, these syllables are united and counted as one called *sinalefa* (e.g. “no advertí”). In this example, Calderón’s use of italianate verses translates into a duple meter musically to accommodate the naturally formed accents.

EXAMPLE 4a. Pedro Calderón de la Barca, librettist of *Celos aun del aire matan*, Act I, Pocris: Con la ciega cólera. (Translations by Louise K. Stein; see footnote 20.)

| /  o  /  o  o  / |
|---|---|---|---|
cólera, (no ad)vertí (+1) = 7
| o  /  o  /  o  /  o |
| (que en) la cuchilla puesta = 7
| o  /  o  o  /  o  /  |
tenía la ma(no; y) tan(to = 7
| /  o  /  o  o  /  o  |
al) herirme con ella = 7
| o  /  o  /  o  /  o  |
| la púrpura de rojo = 7
| o  /  o  /  o  /  o  |
coral que (la en)sangrienta, = 7
| /  o  /  o  o  /  o  |
| (me es)tremece, me hiela = 7
| /  o  /  o  o  /  o  /  o  |
| me desmaya, (me a)flige, (me a)tormenta, = 11
| /  o  /  o  o  /  o  |
| que (ni a)liento, ni vivo, = 7
| o  /  o  /  o  /  o  |
| (y en) ofusca(da i)dea = 7
| o  /  o  /  o  /  o  |
de sombras que (me a)saltan, = 7
| o  /  o  /  o  /  o  |
| (de ho)rrores que me cercan, = 7

Legend:
| /  = stressed syllable |
| o  = unstressed syllable |
| (...) = sinalefa |
| (+1) and (-1) = accentuation rules for counting syllables |

Blinded by my own rage, I did not notice that on the knife’s blade I had placed my hand; such that when I cut myself on it the deep color of red coral that bleeds makes me tremble, and freeze, leaves me faint, afflicts me, torments me, for I neither breathe, nor live, and in a blurry vision of shadows that assault me, of horrors that surround me, I know not, I know nothing of myself.

[Stepwise and triadic melodic contour]

Circle of fifths: A-D-G-E-A-D-G-C

/ o / o / o /
Espiró la luz pura = 7
o / o / o / o / o / o
del sol, sin espirar la de (su es)fera, = 11
o / o / o / o
en cuya peña dura = 7
/ o / o o / o
dl (la her)mosura naciera, = 7
/ o / o o / o / o si naciera sembrada (la her)mosura. = 11
/ o / / o / o
¿Có(mo en) el desconsuelo = 7
o / o / o / o / o / o de todos, más por vuestro que por mío, = 11
o / o o / / o
del dí(a al) azul velo = 7
o / o / o / o (a e)ste cadaver frío = 7
o / o / o / / o / o (no ha)(ce en) exequias qué…? ¡Válga(me el) cielo!20 = 11

Legend:
/ = stressed syllable
o = unstressed syllable
(…) = sinalefa
(+1) and (-1) = accentuation rules for counting syllables

The pure light of the sun died
without extinguishing the light of its sphere,
in whose harsh rock
beauty would have been born,
if beauty were born from seed.
Why, in the midst of the desolation
of us all, indeed more yours than mine,
does the blue veil of the day not
[fall as has] this cold corpse
to make funeral rites that…Heaven protect me!

Calderón de la Barca’s use of hepta- and hendecasyllable lines occur at important events in the plot of this opera. Act I develops in the ideal setting for a crime of passion and love, a garden. It is Diana’s realm and she forbids the nymphs to fall in love, but Aura loves Eróstrato. Aura’s best friend, Pocris, denounces her to Diana, who ties Aura to a tree and sentences her to death by arrows. Before Aura is killed she curses Pocris to avenge her imminent death and declares that Pocris will suffer in love. In anguish, Aura cries out for help and Venus answers her by converting her into a nymph of the air causing Diana to drop her spear. Céfalo takes the fallen spear and Pocris tries to retrieve it. In this struggle for the weapon, Pocris wounds herself. Céfalo, worried, comes close to her and in the intimacy of their approach they fall in love. It is in this key moment of the plot that Calderón de la Barca uses the Italian versification.

Juan Hidalgo sets this recitative in duple meter, another Italian influence. Though the melody is more lyrical than the recitatives composed in Italy during the 1660s, this melodic contour reflects the early practices of recitative, similar to Peri and Caccini. Because the first performance of opera in King Philip IV’s court was in 1627, it is most likely that Calderón de la Barca and Hidalgo had known the early forms of recitative. Pocris sings in stepwise motion with a few triadic leaps in a wide range extending from B-flat 3 to F 5. Examples of Hidalgo’s text painting and his great attention to the text occur when Pocris sings “me estremece, me hiela, me desmaya, me aflige” (makes me tremble, and freeze, leaves me faint, afflicts me, torments me). Here the voice leaps down drastically from an E 5 to B-flat 3 as Pocris evolves from trembling to a feeling of torment (bracketed in red). When Pocris is confronted by these feelings, her melodic line
becomes repetitive, triadic, and in instances chromatic, resembling the early experimentations of Italians with *stile recitativo*. Towards the end of this example, Hidalgo employs Peri’s circle of fifths (shaded in blue in example 4b) moving from A to D to G and E-A-D-G-C. In the Spanish *romances* the basso continuo is likely to move in triadic motion, such as D-B-G. Therefore, the use of the circle of fifths points to another Italian influence in the musical composition of this opera. From the first act, clear traces of Italian influence appear in *Celos aun del aire matan*.

Throughout the opera, Calderón and Hidalgo demonstrate progress in their adaptation and dominion of Italian influence. Toward the end of the opera, in another crucial moment of the plot, Calderón uses the italianate versification once more. During this scene, Céfalo is out hunting in the woods. Pocris thinks Céfalo is on his way to meet with another woman so she follows him and hides in the bushes. She hears him calling out to “Laura.” Céfalo aims at a wild animal, but his spear reaches Pocris, fatally wounding her. She sings of how her unfounded jealousy led to death and Céfalo responds in the recitative found in example 5. Pocris lies in the woods dead as Céfalo describes her beauty and questions why the heavens could remain blue when his love is lying dead before him. Once he pronounces these words, he faints due to his anguish and despair.

The ten verses Céfalo sings before he collapses follow the rhyme scheme of a Sicilian quintain in its primordial structure, without iambic pentameter. These seven- and eleven-syllable lines demonstrate Calderón’s ability to adapt the Italian meter to Spanish accentuation without compromising the text. Like Ottavio Rinuccini, Calderón de la Barca experiments with the different versifications as he attempts to adapt and create his
version, a Spanish version, of opera. Juan Hidalgo exhibits this process in his compositional writing. Céfalo begins singing in stepwise motion, but enraptured in his anguish can only resort to repeated notes. The eighth-note rests disrupt the verses representing Céfalo’s processing of what just happened: Pocris lies dead at his feet due to his fatal wound. As he describes how beauty would have been born from her, Céfalo’s voice moves chromatically from C to C-sharp, progressing from A minor to major.

Musically, Hidalgo enhances the text of Calderón de la Barca with this word painting. This recitative can be seen as an important accomplishment in the emergence of opera in Spain. An Italianate versification in duple meter with a melodic contour resembling that of Peri and Caccini is combined with the harmonic progression common in Spanish secular music—triadic motion (e.g., D-B-flat-G, highlighted in blue).

This brief literary and musical analysis of key moments in the opera shed light onto the argument of Italian influence in the emergence of opera in Spain. Although it took twenty-five years for the Spanish to begin experimenting with opera after its introduction in 1627, the evident traces of Italian influence cannot be cast aside. Calderón de la Barca and Hidalgo stepped away from the common Spanish romance in triple meter to experiment with the Italian hepta- and hendecasyllable lines set to music in duple meter. The origins of the Spanish recitado display an undeniable Italian influence.

Certainly, Spaniards developed their own recitative as they tested different ideas. In Spain, opera continued to develop after Celos aun del aire matan, although it evolved into an aristocratic genre limited to exclusive circles, thus hindering its popularity and dissemination. Calderón de la Barca and Hidalgo had the task of adapting an imported
genre to reflect Spanish tastes. In *Celos aun del aire matan*, these two Spaniards display their use of Italian versification, meter, and harmonic progression in their quest to create a Spanish version of opera.
EPILOGUE
*Celos aun del aire matan*, on a libretto by Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca and music by Juan Hidalgo, represents the first fully sung Spanish opera with surviving libretto and music. Historically, this is also the first opera written, composed, and performed entirely by Spaniards. Performed to commemorate the first-year wedding anniversary of King Louis XIV and Infanta María Teresa, this opera started and ended in a particular political environment that shaped its reception history. Although performed various times in the seventeenth century, the public viewed opera as an imported genre.\(^1\) Calderón de la Barca and Hidalgo attempted the creation of a Spanish opera by merging Italianate characteristics, such as the recitative, with Spanish peculiarities, such as the coplas. Nonetheless, the death of King Philip IV in 1665 proved fatal to the further experimentation with the genre and the establishment of a definitive Spanish operatic style.

King Philip IV died on 17 September 1665 leaving the throne to his four-year-old son, Charles II (1661-1700). His mother, Mariana of Austria (1634-1696), led Spain until Charles came of age in 1676. Due to generations of inbreeding in the Habsburg dynasty, Charles suffered from bad health. Upon King Philip IV’s death the theaters in the Buen Retiro Palace shut down until 1670 when Calderón de la Barca and Juan Hidalgo

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resumed their collaboration in writing semi-operas.² Charles II also favored the arts and appointed Francisco Bances Candamo (1662-1704) as official dramaturg. The dramaturg was thirty years old and the first to be appointed to this position in the Spanish monarchy. Unlike Calderón de la Barca, Bances Candamo spoke openly and directly about political affairs using his art for political intentions. He favored the succession of the child Joseph Ferdinand (1692-1699), son of Maximilian II (1662-1726) and the granddaughter of King Philip IV, Maria Antonia of Austria (1669-1692), to the throne of Spain, but when his candidate failed, he left the court. The following century would bring great political change that influenced the Spanish development of opera.³

King Charles II died without an heir resulting in a war that lasted more than ten years. The civil and international War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) proved devastating to the efforts of Calderón de la Barca and Hidalgo to create a Spanish opera. The Bourbon prince, Philip V (1683-1746), won the political war and married Italian

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³ Ibid., 129-57.
women, first Maria Luisa of Savoy (1688-1714) and then Elisabetta Farnese of Parma (1692-1766). The languages of the court shifted from Spanish to French and Italian. Hence, royal entertainment in Madrid was also in foreign languages. Dowling states that “Italian opera, sung in Italian by Italian singers to music played by Italian musicians, gained ascendency” in the Spanish Royal court. The Spanish lyric theater faced fierce competition, but the tradition left by Lope de Vega and Calderón remained steadfast although it did not include opera.

This artistic Italian influence in Spain included the introduction of libretti by Apostolo Zeno (1668-1750) and Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782). Spanish playwrights such as Antonio de Zamora (ca. 1664-1728), Antonio de Literes (1673-1747), and José de Cañizares (1676-1750) adapted the libretti to Spanish customs, educating the audience and musicians to the topics and music popular throughout Europe. One of the great events of Philip V’s reign was the patronage of the extraordinary castrato Carlo Broschi (1705-1782), also known as Farinelli, The queen specifically requested his stay in Madrid, Spain in 1737. He only performed at court for the pleasure of the queen and supervised the renovation of the Buen Retiro Palace along with the entertainment of the court. The Buen Retiro palace was reopened on 9 May 1738 and remained in use throughout the reign of Ferdinand VI (r. 1746-1759). His wife, Queen Barbara de Braganza of Portugal (1711-1758), played the clavichord and brought to court her teacher Domenico Scarlatti (1685-1757), son of Alessandro Scarlatti. This monarchy supported

4. Ibid., 137.
5. Ibid.
lyric theater in the Italian style. Charles II’s half-brother, Charles III succeeded to the throne in 1759.⁶

King Charles III did not enjoy the arts, but found a passion for hunting. Therefore, the court did not support any musicians, librettists, or artists. Farinelli was sent back to Italy with a pension. Noble and aristocratic families supported performances in their palaces, but favored zarzuelas instead of opera. The recitative style was rejected once more.⁷ During the last half of the eighteenth century, Spain saw the decline of opera. Clementina (1786), on a libretto by Ramón de la Cruz (1731-1794) and music by Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805), was likely the last opera of that century.⁸ A royal decree of 1799 banned the production of opera in the Italian language, ordering performances to be sung in Spanish by Spaniards. During King Charles IV’s reign (r. 1788-1808), Madrid was invaded by Napoleon. Wars lasted until 1813 destroying the Buen Retiro Palace and the arts fostered before the invasion. Charles IV was the last Bourbon king of Spain. After the Napoleonic invasion, bourgeois families rose in richness due to the appropriation of

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⁶. Ibid.

⁷. Ibid., 143.

⁸. Ibid., 146-47.
Church properties and they became the new patrons of the arts providing new venues for the development of Spain’s music history.  

**Conclusion**

The emergence of opera in Spain resulted in political affairs tied to King Philip IV’s attempt to restore the glory of the Spanish monarchy. Don Pedro Calderón de la Barca and Juan Hidalgo sought to establish Spanish opera, aiming to adapt the imported genre to Spanish customs of theater and music. Nonetheless, politics hindered the further expansion of the product of their collaboration, *Celos aun del aire matan*. The shift to foreign rulers who did not speak Spanish led Italian opera to supersede the production of Spanish opera. Although this event brought distinguished Italian artists to court, such as Farinelli in 1737, Spanish artists stepped away from composing opera and continued their well-established and widely popular theater tradition. Unfortunately, the political history of Spain contributed negatively to the flourishing of opera in Spain.

For this period, further research concerning composers is needed. The history of theater and politics is well documented, but little information is known on the composers and their contributions to the development of the arts in Spain. Although composers

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seemed to maintain a subservient role to the playwrights, their compositions and contributions need investigation in order to understand their influence in Spain’s musical history.

For the opera *Celos aun del aire matan*, greater attention to the musical innovations brought forth by Juan Hidalgo should be investigated. Not only did he contribute to Spain’s *recitado*, but he also included *coplas, romances*, and other Spanish genres to opera, creating an approachable genre for the Spanish public. An exhaustive and complete biography of his life has yet to be written. His musical innovations should be studied in comparison to his Italian, French, German, and English contemporaries. Although research on Spanish music has been more extensive over the last twenty years, there is room for further examination void of nationalistic positions. The further one understands the development of music in Spain, the greater understanding one can gain on musical development in New Spain and the lands conquered by the Spanish kingdom.


