

# *The Copla Musical*

## **An intercultural exploration of a Spanish musical form**

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## DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Alejandro Postigo Gómez, declare that this thesis is composed by me and that all the work herein is my own, unless explicitly attributed to others. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

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Date: 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Material drawn from sections of this thesis have been published, or are forthcoming, in the following book chapters and articles:

### Book chapters:

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## ABSTRACT

This Practice-as-Research thesis, *The Copla Musical*, explores an intercultural adaptation of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish folkloric song-form of *copla*. Enjoying great popularity during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, *copla*'s influence waned in the latter years of the Franco regime. It remains, however, a strong marker of Spanish cultural identity through nostalgic musical preservation. This project investigates *copla*'s roots as a storytelling form, its position as a folkloric genre and its role as a subversive tool in the Spanish 20<sup>th</sup>-century zeitgeist. It asks new questions of *copla*, by documenting and analysing the process of sharing my experience of this musical form with audiences outside Spain, testing the findings in an iterative context. Merging *copla* with elements found in Anglo-American musical theatre structures such as book musicals, revues and jukebox shows, *The Copla Musical* shows the ways in which this cultural form can be appropriated within an alternative theatrical and socio-political context. The numerous performances documented and commented on in the thesis allow for a discussion of divergent forms of musical theatre, audience engagement and cultural difference.

Chapter 1 (Positioning *copla*) presents a history of musical theatre in Spain, framing *copla* in relation to Anglophone developments of musical theatre. Chapter 2 (Adapting *copla*) analyses the theoretical framework to my practice: translation, intercultural and queer theories, and their influence on the practical elements of the thesis. Chapter 3 (Making *copla*) explores resonances of the practice in its various presentations. The thesis is accompanied by a series of appendices and a website which documents the evolution and iterations of the practice ([www.thecoplamusical.com](http://www.thecoplamusical.com)). In its totality, the project demonstrates the possibilities for *copla* to be appropriated as a musical form that can travel beyond its Spanish roots.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration of authorship	2
Acknowledgements	3
Abstract	4
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
Presenting the rationale: why a <i>copla</i> musical?	7
Contextualising the researcher	10
Organisation of the thesis	12
Chapter 1: Positioning <i>copla</i>	13
Chapter 2: Adapting <i>copla</i>	15
Chapter 3: Making <i>copla</i>	17
Conclusion and appendices	19
<b>CHAPTER 1: POSITIONING COPLA: FRAMING COPLA WITHIN MODELS OF SPANISH AND ANGLOPHONE MUSICAL THEATRE</b>	<b>21</b>
1.1. Labelling the historical development of Spanish musical theatre	21
1.1.1. The <i>zarzuela</i> and its forerunners: opera and <i>tonadilla escénica</i>	23
1.1.2. The <i>revista</i> (revue)	31
1.1.3. The (global) musical	35
1.2. What is <i>copla</i> ?	40
1.2.1. Terminology: the coining of the genre	40
1.2.2. Definition and features	42
1.2.3. Origins and background	46
1.2.4. Historical evolution	48
1.3. Historical parallels between <i>copla</i> and Anglo-American paradigms	56
<b>CHAPTER 2. ADAPTING COPLA: FRAMING THE TRANSLATION, INTERCULTURAL AND QUEER INPUTS IN THE MAKING OF <i>THE COPLA MUSICAL</i></b>	<b>62</b>
2.1. Translation theories	62
2.1.1. Foreignizing / domesticating debate	66
2.1.2. Translating <i>copla</i> : the case of rhyme and rhythm	71
2.2. Negotiating an intercultural adaptation	79
2.2.1. Definition and perspectives	79
2.2.2. Views and positions of interculturalism	81
2.2.3. Intercultural terminology	84
2.2.4. Models of reference: Ortiz, Lo and Gilbert and Pavis' hourglass	86
2.2.5. An introduction to our intercultural process	88
2.2.6. The Performance of English <i>copla</i>	90

2.3.	Queer considerations	92
2.3.1.	Queer theory applied to musical theatre	94
2.3.2.	A Spanish contextualisation of queer	100
2.3.3.	The role of <i>copla</i> as marker of gender identity	102
<b>CHAPTER 3. MAKING COPLA: ARTICULATING THEORY THROUGH PRACTICE</b>		<b>109</b>
3.1.	First iteration: <i>The Copla Musical</i> as a 'conventional' book musical (2011-13)	110
3.1.1.	Dramaturgical principles of <i>The Copla Musical</i>	113
3.1.2.	Musical aspects of the production	118
3.1.2.1.	The jukebox rationale	118
3.1.2.2.	Song classifications	121
	A) Character songs	121
	B) Songs with Narrative Functions	123
	C) Diegetic songs and musical style	126
3.2.2.3.	Music and lyrical concerns	129
	A) Grammatical constructions	130
	B) Metrics and Semantics	131
3.2.	Second iteration: The Solo (2014-17)	134
3.2.1.	A Queer analysis	136
3.2.1.1.	Queer influences	137
3.2.1.2.	Spanish Camp	140
3.3.	Third iteration: The Cabaret (2015-17)	145
3.3.1.	The cabaret as Practice-as-Research format	146
3.3.2.	The intercultural exchange	148
3.3.3.	English <i>copla</i>	150
3.3.4.	My position	152
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>		<b>154</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>		<b>160</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: LIST OF PERFORMANCES AND COLLABORATORS</b>		<b>170</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: SCRIPTS</b>		<b>174</b>
	<i>The Copla Musical</i>	174
	<i>The Copla Solo</i>	220
	<i>The Copla Cabaret</i>	233
<b>APPENDIX C: SAMPLE OF AUDIENCE EVALUATIONS</b>		<b>241</b>

## INTRODUCTION

*The Copla Musical: An intercultural exploration of a Spanish musical form* is a Practice-as-Research doctoral project that involves the translation and integration of Spanish *copla* songs into newly devised narratives that question the political relevance of the *copla* genre and its current socio-political position in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By creating a contemporary musical theatre project in the UK that both draws on processes of intercultural exchange and engages with issues of queer performance and cultural translation, I intend to offer new insights into areas related to the circulation and production of musical theatre works across different national contexts.

### **Presenting the rationale: why a *copla* musical?**

This is a thesis about a particular tradition of musical performance in Spain that is not well known in the English-speaking world. Unlike scholars from Hispanism who have engaged with the intellectual history of the *copla* form,<sup>1</sup> I am working through practice to examine how *copla* might work in a performance context outside Spain. The research undertaken for this thesis is evidenced both in the practice – which has produced three iterations of a musical on *copla* – and in the 71,550-word component that demonstrates my engagement with a range of critical frameworks that have shaped the formation of the artistic research.

I bring a body of professional experience of working in musical theatre in Britain to this project (see the following ‘Contextualising the researcher’ section). Through this experience, I have noticed a general lack of cultural diversity with regard both to the genre and its practitioners. This ‘lack’ of diversity also applies to musical theatre produced in Spain and the Spanish-speaking world, where the market is predominantly dominated by Anglo-American musicals. Throughout my career, I have worked extensively with Anglo-American musicals, and I wanted to use this project to explore a domestic (rather than an imported) tradition, analysing the reasons why works from Spain are not better known or produced outside the domestic market. It is my hope that the creation of *The Copla Musical* helps to introduce a Spanish musical theatre form to non-Spanish audiences, and that this might generate further interest in transnational musical collaborations that allow lesser known genres new opportunities in different cultural environments.

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<sup>1</sup> A few examples in the bibliography include Acosta et al. (1994), Brennan (1995), Cansinos Assens (1998), Román (2000) and Zoido (2002).

The development of an autochthonous musical theatre in Spain was disrupted during the Francoist dictatorship (1939-1975) and progressively replaced with the importation of American musicals in the period that followed the transition to democracy post-1975. This historical disruption of Spanish musical theatre occurred at a parallel historical moment to the American integration of song and plot into what is known as 'the book musical'.<sup>2</sup> This thesis explores the possibilities for revisiting and rejuvenating this 'lost' period of Spanish revues by creating a practice that fuses the Spanish tradition of *copla* with some of the most recurrent paradigms of British and American musical theatre, namely musical comedies and jukebox musicals. These, together with the book musical, serve as a model for the development and structuring of the practice accompanying this research, *The Copla Musical*.

*Copla* songs are folk songs popularised throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Spain that became a popular component of variety shows during the Second Republic, the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent fascist dictatorship. *Copla* songs find their first musical foundations in folkloric forms like *pasodoble* and *flamenco*, and are mainly differentiated from those musical forms by their theatrical quality. The popular songform of *copla* combines the telling of a story within a short narrative that lasts for only a few minutes: the story being a self-contained narrative made of a beginning, a climax and an ending. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, *copla* became a dominant genre in Spain's intellectual, political and artistic spheres, performed in cafes and cabarets with audiences that blended different social classes. During the years of the Second Republic (1931-36), *copla* songs were popularised across a divided population of diverse social classes and opposing ideologies. This popularity continued for both factions throughout the war (1936-39), and at the start of the dictatorship (1939), fascist propaganda appropriated and manipulated this genre, as they did with many other art forms that had flourished in Republican Spain. Thus, during the Franco regime, *copla* singers presented strong conservative images in tune with the ideals of the regime.

Despite *copla*'s popularity in Spain, its relationship to other song styles and musical theatre forms which prevailed from the UK and USA has not been explored in any degree of detail. But given the increasing sensitivity towards mega-musical<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The establishment of the book musical is pinned to the period between the opening of American musicals *Showboat* (1927) and *Oklahoma!* (1943), the first musicals to integrate libretto, score and choreography with a dramatic goal.

<sup>3</sup> Playwright and academic Dan Rebellato defines mega-musicals as 'visually spectacular, quasi-operatic musical theatre productions, many of them globally successful, performed thousands of times in front of millions of people in hundreds of productions in dozens of cities worldwide' (Rebellato 2006: 98).

imports in Spain,<sup>4</sup> I have established a historical comparison between *copla* and musical theatre produced in Britain and America with a view to facilitating the intercultural exploration proposed in my Practice-as-Research (PaR). *The Copla Musical* explores how the *copla* songs that once formed part of revues and folkloric theatre shows might be adapted and integrated into a contemporary musical theatre show conceived and presented outside Spain that negotiates *copla*'s cultural identity in an alternative linguistic and cultural context. The practice thus aims to combine this Spanish folkloric song-form with principles inherent to the musical theatre artworks found in Britain and America that I group under the term 'Anglophone musical theatre'. Anglophone musical theatre has drawn on and adopted a variety of indigenous art forms through its historical development; therefore, it could arguably facilitate too the integration of Spanish *copla* into a book musical structure that could generate new interest in the genre outside of Spain.

In this practice, I follow an intercultural process focused on collaborating with a group of artists representing both Anglophone and Spanish cultures, and presenting each iteration of the work to a diverse audience from Spanish and non-Spanish backgrounds to experience the show from various cultural perspectives. My collaborators throughout the various iterations of the practice have included American directors Sarah Johnson and RM Sánchez-Camus, British directors Dom Riley and Tian Glasgow and Spanish directors Reyes Hiraldo, Andrea Jiménez and Enrique Muñoz. Equally the creative team has included a variety of actors, musicians and artists from British, Spanish and other international backgrounds.<sup>5</sup> The PaR looks at different traditions of musical theatre in Spain, Britain and America and tries to create a musical that draws on all of these.

The intercultural creation of a modern *copla* musical also engages with the principles underpinning the creation of musicals in a globalized 21<sup>st</sup> century. I would argue that the process of crafting a hybrid form of musical theatre through collaborative processes mirrors the way that the popular genre generally developed in America, through appropriations of new forms and functions from other local and foreign cultures. This research identifies the discourses of dramaturgy and performance style(s) in the context of the dominant paradigms of musical theatre produced in America and Britain, and analyses how an intercultural approach drawing on a specific Spanish tradition challenges and explores the creation of a new musical by bringing

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<sup>4</sup> Marta Mateo (2008) and Mia Patterson (2010) explain in detail the growing demand of Anglo-American mega-musicals in Spain throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. This will be discussed in Chapter 1.1.3 of this thesis.

<sup>5</sup> A full list of collaborator credits is listed in the Appendix A of this thesis.

material that has not circulated outside the Spanish-speaking world, in this case *copla*, into the arena of Anglo-American musical theatre. At the same time, the practice generates questions that challenge, renew or complement current theory about intercultural adaptation. Using examples from different periods of British and American musical theatre, I will try to demonstrate in Chapter 3 how the composers and lyricists of those shows exercised dramaturgical principles which pertain to integrated (book musical) or non-integrated (revues, jukebox) musical theatre styles. These inform the dramaturgical principles that I used to create *The Copla Musical*.

This thesis originally aimed to produce a full-length musical that re-imagines and expands *copla* beyond a Spanish context. However, further developments and research considerations have led to the creation of an additional two shows: *The Copla Solo* and *The Copla Cabaret*. These additional iterations of the practice specifically explore queer and migrant considerations associated with *copla*. During the dictatorship *copla* represented a series of national-catholic values imposed by the regime, which were far from the original intention of the songs. In the political climate of 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe, these songs register a new significance, especially when they enter in contact with other cultures. Thus, further possibilities for identification with the melodramatic narratives and emotions of the *copla* lyrics, such as those experienced by homosexual groups silenced during the dictatorship, can now be more openly explored artistically. My performance experience (that includes cross-gendering in my embodiment of *copla*) offers another scope to the intercultural analysis. My experience echoes the past experiences of the marginal communities that originally identified with *copla*. Being displaced from my country sparked a new-born interest in exploring my Spanish cultural identity through the study of *copla*. It is as an immigrant that I have noticed its evocative power, and practiced a personal approach to these songs that has made me consider studying and disseminating this experience of *copla* to other cultures.

### **Contextualising the researcher**

I am a theatre practitioner born in Madrid, but I have spent the last twelve years of my life studying and working as a professional musical theatre performer between the UK and the USA. I have received an international education at the Complutense University in Madrid (Spain), Paris VIII University in Paris (France), Illinois Wesleyan University (USA) and most recently The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London (UK) where I obtained my Masters in Musical Theatre in 2010. Since then I

have been part of the cast of professional musicals like *In The Heights* (Kings Cross Theatre, London West End, 2016) and ballets like *Swan Lake* and *The Winter's Tale* (Royal Opera House, London, 2014-18). I have also directed theatre shows relating to themes of Spanish cultural identity, such as *Men on the Verge of a HisPanic Breakdown* (Henley Fringe Festival, UK, 2010), or *Bernarda Alba* (Mumford Theatre, Cambridge, 2017). While living abroad, I have developed a stronger connection to my roots and an expanded interest in my country's folklore, especially *copla*. My motivation in beginning this research was to find a universal connection between *copla* and other international art forms that would allow me to explore creative possibilities for the development of Spanish musical theatre culture in relation to other non-Spanish musical theatre manifestations. This research led me to uncover the progressive fading of the Spanish musical, and to analyse Spanish cultural values from a non-Spanish perspective. In this process, I have questioned the accessibility and exportability of my own Spanish cultural identity, and aimed to re-imagine and expand *copla* beyond Spanish boundaries with views to reach a larger non-Spanish community.

My reasons for pursuing this exploration are proceeded by both historical and practical concerns. The first concern is the historical development of *copla*, which mirrors the development of musical theatre in America and yet departs from its historical narrative by failing to evolve into an identifiable Spanish genre of musical theatre. The practical concern is a means of answering the historical interruption in the development of Spanish musical theatre, which, in my view, a purely theoretical investigation cannot fully address. The accompanying practice involves the staging of a series of musical theatre works that have been created through an intercultural adaptation, translating and integrating a number of Spanish *copla* songs into theatrical narratives, and presenting them to a non-exclusively Spanish audience in London and abroad,<sup>6</sup> as a means of locating the sites where these intercultural processes occur. London is one of the historical landmarks for musical theatre production, but also a multicultural site of convergence that allows me to reevaluate and contextualize *copla*'s position in history, and to reassess the relationship of Spanish folklore and culture to external influences.

I believe I am well positioned to carry out this research because of the combination of my Spanish cultural and educational background, that includes a cultural knowledge of Spanish *copla*, and my Anglo-Saxon education and professional experiences. My knowledge of both English and Spanish languages to a fluent degree

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<sup>6</sup> The practice has so far been presented in the UK (London, York), Spain (Barcelona, Seville, Vitoria), Bulgaria (Stara Zagora) and Bolivia (Santa Cruz de la Sierra).

facilitates and makes possible the exercise of translation and adaptation at the heart of this investigation. Central to the development of this practice there is also a question of agency: I am the initiator of the translation of *copla* songs and author of the shows, but ultimately, I am also the performer of these shows that interrogate my own Spanish cultural identity. I write, devise and perform the ideas of this PaR in negotiation with other members of the artistic team, but I am ultimately responsible for the research developments of the practice. My artistic relationship with my collaborators varies according to their roles in the project and their artistic approach, often conditioned by their own cultural identities. For example, Anglo-American musical directors and musicians filter their understanding of *copla* through my own experience, and apply their knowledge and experience of musical theatre to create the new intercultural song form of English *copla*. Equally, audiences encounter *copla* through my performance of it, and I make them part of the cultural exchange as they participate and engage with the show.

### **Organisation of the thesis**

This project's findings are presented both through the practice – the three iterations of the musical – and in a written 71,550-word thesis divided in three main chapters. The practice has developed from 2011 to 2017, resulting in three professional shows that have benefited from presentations, mainly in the UK and Spain. Recordings of the shows are presented on an accompanying USB, but online links are also accessible in the Appendix A of this thesis. There are also links to some of the works in progress and international performances. Additionally, finalised scripts of all three shows are also included in the Appendix B, where the use of *copla* in dramatic playwriting is evidenced. Appendix C includes a sample of audience responses to a short evaluation after seeing the shows.

In the written thesis, each chapter presents its own literature survey covering the significant areas of research undertaken by previous academics working in the areas of Spanish musical theatre, intercultural performance practices, queer theory and translation studies, and the making of musical theatre. Chapter 1 presents a historical survey of Spanish musical theatre with a special focus on the historical development of *copla*. Chapter 2 then follows to present the three theoretical frameworks that frame the making of the practice. This chapter looks first at translation theory, then at intercultural theory and finally at queer theory. All three sections address the applicability of these theoretical strands to *The Copla Musical* through concrete

examples. Lastly, Chapter 3 presents an articulation of the making of each iteration of the practice, leading to the creation of the shows *The Copla Musical*, *The Copla Solo* and *The Copla Cabaret*. The following paragraphs will describe in more detail the contents of each chapter with a rationale for the areas that I have chosen to cover.

## **Chapter 1: Positioning *copla***

In Chapter 1, I position *copla* within different models of Spanish and Anglophone musical theatre as a way of contextualizing this genre within the different performance traditions that I will be working with through the practice. I begin by tracing *copla*'s links to Spanish musical theatre by discussing the development of indigenous forms of musical theatre in Spain. For that purpose, I reference the work of scholars including Rafael Lamas (2012),<sup>7</sup> Juan José Montijano (2010), Mia Patterson (2010), Marta Mateo (2008) and Antonio Fernández Cid (1975). I argue that the Spanish musical theatre genres of Zarzuela, *revista*, and the incipiently popular folkloric shows that included *copla* songs, were disrupted by the Civil War and the subsequent Francoist dictatorship. The regime's insistence on imposing its ideological agenda through a control of culture subsequently shaped the content of musical theatre works that had proliferated during the liberal years of Spain's Second Republic. The censored, pro-Franco Zarzuelas and revues enjoyed a prolific existence throughout the first few decades of the dictatorship but then suffered a decline from the late 1960s, aggravated in the 1970s and 1980s by 'the disappearance of recognized composers, librettists, showgirls and comedians as well as the increasing production costs, which led the genre to near extinction' (Montijano 2010: 242).<sup>8</sup> The 'disappearance' of such revues left a vacuum in the entertainment industry quickly filled by Anglo-American blockbuster imports like *Jesus Christ Superstar* or *Man of la Mancha*. What Montijano describes as 'decadent Spanish revues' were replaced by Anglo-American 'mega-musicals' that to this day attract spectators in far more copious numbers than the autochthonous musicals managed.

In this chapter I argue that the historical disruption of the artistic evolution of Spanish musical theatre identified above occurred at a moment prior to the integration of song and plot into what is known in America as the 'book musical'. Therefore, I will

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<sup>7</sup> This thesis uses Harvard's author-date referencing system.

<sup>8</sup> All translations from the Spanish original are by the author: 'La desaparición de los grandes compositores y libretistas del género, el elevado coste de estas producciones, la carencia de grandes vedettes y cómicos [...] van a ser los factores fundamentales que obliguen a la casi completa extinción del género' (Montijano 2010: 242).

describe the history of musical theatre in Spain in relation to Britain and America, with aims to identify the ruptures in the evolution of Spanish musical theatre and the progressive disengagement of its audience commencing in the early years of the dictatorship. In doing this I hope to establish a link between the decline of pre-existing Spanish forms of musical theatre, and the rise of other types of musical entertainment. This chapter will explore the trajectory and influences of musical theatre forms developed in Spain (as with Zarzuela, *revista*, and *copla*), and will define and compare the American 'book musical' in relation to other pre-existing American musical theatre paradigms of that same period (1930s-1950s): the Tin Pan Alley musical comedies, forerunners for the development and integration of musical theatre, and the Jukebox Musicals, a formula that compiles pre-existing popular songs into a narrative that the audience can relate to because of its cultural associations. These American paradigms, as studied by Millie Taylor (2012), David Savran (2011), Bruce Kirle (2005), and Raymond Knapp (2004), will be discussed in relation to the developments occurring synchronically in Spanish musical theatre. This comparative historical revisionism will allow further analysis of the current interactions of musical theatre in Spain, Britain and America. It will also permit me to examine the initiatives that have rejuvenated the Spanish musical, attending to potential interrelations of current musical theatre guidelines facilitated by Anglo-American developments of the genre.

The core of this chapter explores the evolution of *copla*, a genre that experienced a successful but tumultuous development throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By commenting on studies of *copla* by Stephanie Sieburth (2014), Manuel Francisco Reina (2009), Manuel Román (2000) and Gerard Brenan (1995) among others, I chart the modes through which *copla* functioned as an embodiment of Spain's changes in the period after the Civil War and the impact these songs had on both victors and vanquished. In the Spain of the 1940s, culture and arts were challenged by an era of autarchy in which the new regime intended to create a type of song that represented Spanish idiosyncrasy without overt reference to or acknowledged use of any non-Spanish art forms. *Copla*, however, also served as an instrument for the catharsis of repressed pain during the dictatorship,<sup>9</sup> with a culture of forced and imposed cheerfulness masking experiences silenced by the fascist regime. *Copla* has thus become a nostalgic memory through which to reconstruct Spain's past, and a vehicle for recovering how the defeated felt during the post-War period and beyond, as well as a source of allusion to their experiences opposing the official Francoist histories of the

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<sup>9</sup> Repeated daily over years on radio, *copla* enabled the defeated to perform a series of psychological moves that were necessary to their survival (Sieburth 2014: 8). For more on the social and psychological value of *copla* songs post-Civil War, see Sieburth's book *Survival Songs* (2014).

period.<sup>10</sup> At this time, as Anglo-American musicals dominate the Spanish theatres, and even the worldwide musical theatre industry, only by investigating the evolution of the American musical I can try to consider how *copla* may be adapted into a contemporary musical informed by a musical theatre culture that is increasingly cross-cultural.

## Chapter 2: Adapting *copla*

This chapter addresses the specific theoretical positions and writing/performance strategies that I adopted in creating the accompanying practice to this thesis. The chapter starts considering the role of translating *copla* songs, for which it presents a literature survey on translation theory. The views of theatre translators and scholars like Lawrence Venuti (2012), Sirku Aaltonen (2000), and David Johnston (1996) are contrasted and applied to the task of translation in *The Copla Musical*. Venuti asserts that translators receive minimal recognition for their work, and that praise occurs by operating in an unnoticed manner.<sup>11</sup> The transparency that Venuti refers to is, in most cases, challenging to achieve and, if taken too literally, can possibly be counter-productive. Such is the case of *The Copla Musical*, in which the translation of *copla* songs takes place in a new historical and geographical context, which differs from their original site of production in post-Civil War Spain: a political context marked by artistic censorship. As I discuss throughout this thesis, the social relevance of *copla* songs in Spain is manifest in their role as part of the collective memory of Spanish society and a key component of popular culture throughout a difficult period in the country's history. *The Copla Musical* has to be formulated for an audience in Britain that is not familiar with *copla* or its history, and this audience needs, I would argue, to understand the contents of the show in order to engage with it. Alternatively, other strategies must be put in place to appeal to the emotions, as the original lyrics did. This section presents a series of examples and case studies about the translation processes involved in the practice. For instance, *The Copla Musical* is built on the basis that pre-existing Spanish *copla* songs are selected, arranged and transformed to fit into an original libretto written in English that is narratively completed by these songs. I will explain how the selection and translation of songs has impacted on the modification of some lyrics in order to adhere to the narrative created for this show. I will also comment on the musical changes and lyric adaptations that have been

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<sup>10</sup> For further details, see Sieburth (2014: 6).

<sup>11</sup> 'The illusion of transparency is an effect of fluent discourse, of the translator's effort to ensure easy readability by adhering to current usage, maintaining continuous syntax, fixing a precise meaning' (Venuti 2012: 1). Venuti defends that 'the more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator, and, presumably, the more visible the writer of the foreign text' (2012: 2).

made as part of the translation of *copla* songs to their new language. Such changes involve rhythm, rhyme, structure, prosody and semantical considerations.

This chapter also aims to reflect on the hybrid nature of the practice based on contributions to the intercultural discourse made by theorists such as Richard Schechner (2002), Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert (2002), Rustom Bharucha (2000), Patrice Pavis (1992) and Erika Fischer Lichte (1990). They shed light on problems of cultural identification in musical theatre, where problems such as exoticism feed a dominant Anglo-speaking culture. In this chapter, I explore the definitions, positions and terminology attached to intercultural theory as well as apply some intercultural models to my practice in order to frame the exchange between Spanish and Anglo-speaking musical theatre. I discuss the socio-cultural conditions that have privileged certain principles of expression in relation to the current context that has encouraged the creation of *The Copla Musical* and its theoretical framework. My practice follows research principles from Ortiz's transcultural model (1940), Patrice Pavis' hourglass (1990) and its subsequent critique by Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert (2002). These models function as the conceptual trope for an intercultural experiment that aims to generate a new model formulated through the practice. In this section of the chapter I also discuss, through the process of making *The Copla Musical*, new dynamics of collaboration and creativity that condition the development of an intercultural musical from its conception to its execution. This process thus allows for reflections on possible modes of creating an intercultural musical theatre project that develops and expands the models through which this genre might operate within and beyond the dominant Anglo-American context.

The third critical focus of this chapter addresses the queer elements of the project. *The Copla Musical* rejuvenates *copla* songs through the voice of a transvestite. During the Francoist dictatorship, *copla* became a discourse with a clear agenda in staging very particular gender roles, represented by well-defined stereotypes, that established a precarious discursive position in the regime's moralizing project: a project that insisted on controlling women's behaviour, especially in relation to their sexuality. However, homosexual groups and other minorities have made subversive readings and queer interpretations of the songs. As Sieburth notes, many women managed to alleviate pain and live vicariously through their free interpretation of these songs (2014). Equally, *copla* songs have given opportunities for self-identification and even artistic purpose to many LGBT collectives.<sup>12</sup> Homosexual artists like lyricist Rafael de

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<sup>12</sup> Homosexuals growing up during Franco's dictatorship developed a special relationship with *copla* and appealed to it when they were not capable of assuming their own desire or when this one was denied.

León and singer Miguel de Molina have been long associated with the genre and many songs have been rejuvenated by drag artists since democracy was reintroduced. In this section, I will analyse the application of queer theory to both *copla* and musical theatre in America, Britain and Spain, providing a brief history of 'queer' in Spain, and analysing the relevance of 'queer' to the project. In this section, I draw on the writings of Rafael Mérida (2015), Alberto Mira (2004), Stacey Wolf (2002) and Judith Butler (2002) among others in formulating the framework for the argument.

### **Chapter 3: Making *copla***

This chapter analyses the accompanying practice to this thesis that has generated three professional shows, all of them involving an exploration of the new English *copla*. Each iteration of the practice has acquired a different dimension relating to the translation of songs, their intercultural adaptation and the queer re-contextualisation of the form. This chapter will explore some of the theoretical implications and critical thinking involved in the making of each show. For the analysis of these shows, I primarily follow Julian Woolford's manual *How Musicals Work: And How to Write Your Own* (2013) as a key text. His study on musical theatre writing offers a valuable frame of reference for deconstructing the writing of these shows. It also provides a framework or considering the narrative value of *copla* songs within the storyline that structures my musical. In addition to Woolford, I draw on Lehman Engel (2006), Larry Brown (2007), and Michael Friedman (2006) to further consider how musicals and cabaret operate, reflecting on the implications of their observations for my own practice.

The first iteration of *The Copla Musical* is an ensemble show conceived as a 'conventional' book musical, following the mainstream Anglophone musical theatre model by which songs are part of the storytelling. To do so, I apply the principles of jukebox musicals that use previously released popular songs as their musical score. This iteration of the work gave birth to a traditional, structurally solid musical in two acts that could also work independently as two mini-musicals of around one hour each. The main aim of this first piece involved trying to integrate *copla* songs into a model that has successfully defined commercial musical theatre since the emergence of the book musical. In order to do this, I adapted *copla* songs to become suitable components of narrative musical theatre, attending to not only linguistic but also dramatic challenges. For instance, *copla* songs are self-contained solo songs that mainly focus on the

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When these discourses disappear in the transition to democracy, they are recycled in a parodic manner by other gay artists like Pedro Almodóvar, Terenci Moix, and Eduardo Mendicutti (Mira 2004: 343).

expression of feelings, so they are likely to stop the action. So, as part of the practice, the lyrics of some *copla* songs have been split among various characters, turning the songs into duets or ensemble numbers in which key pieces of information are transmitted to move the narrative on. In this chapter I will explore the strategies that I have used to deal with these kinds of creative challenges and how I negotiate the assignment of narrative functions to *copla* songs in the libretto. This iteration has developed through various works-in-progress at venues such as Hoxton Hall (2011) or the Roundhouse (2013), and it has been presented as a full production at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama's annual PhD performance festival, Collisions, in consecutive years (2012 and 2013).

The second iteration of the practice is a solo show that spun off from the ensemble piece, and focused on retelling the story of its main character La Gitana from a contemporary perspective. This show requires only one actor plus a small music ensemble, and for the purposes of this thesis it is referred to as *The Copla Solo* even though is commonly marketed also as *The Copla Musical*. In the *Solo*, songs are performed by either the character of La Gitana or by the narrator of the piece (both performed by the same actor) and are used to express emotional situations within the story through historical links. Songs from *The Copla Musical* are reused in *The Copla Solo*, however they are re-adapted to a new narrative context, which will be explained in greater detail later in section 3.2 of the chapter. *The Copla Solo* reveals questions about the queer interpretations of *copla* songs and how the queerness of the form is understood in a new international and democratic context free of censorship and political repression. This iteration previewed a first work-in-progress presentation at the Collisions Festival in 2014, and since 2016 has developed professionally thanks partly to an Arts Council England funding award. This is the iteration of the work that has been seen most outside the UK, enjoying presentations in Spain, Bulgaria and Bolivia, as well as England.

A third iteration of the practice is *The Copla Cabaret*, a different show in nature and structure altogether. Initially conceived as a 'performance lecture' in 2015, the *Cabaret* establishes an enquiring relationship with the audience and questions both the significance of *copla* outside Spain and its applicability to reflect on the experience of migrant and queer minorities. Unlike previous iterations of the practice, the *Cabaret* borrows only from non-integrated paradigms of musical theatre, namely the revue and jukebox musical. As a cabaret show, one of the main elements at stake in this creative iteration is my own experience and personal connection to *copla*. Identity and cabaret performance are closely interrelated, as cabaret performances are created directly

from the artists' inputs that incorporate and expose personal and ideological concerns.<sup>13</sup> The artifice of the form does not hide the fact that the contents are often self-generated and as Friedman claims, 'personality-based' (2006: 319). Performers are often the most remembered component of a musical, and this is even more applicable to a cabaret performance. The cabaret format allows for a more personal exposition to unveil aspects that are relevant to the research and the content of the show. The cabaret was first presented as part of Collisions in 2015 but has been performed in the Basque Country in 2017, when re-written for a Spanish audience with a presumed experience of *copla*.

### **Conclusion and appendices**

The thesis will finish by articulating the conclusions and contributions that this project can offer to future work in this area, exploring how a supposedly 'dated' folkloric form like *copla* can travel and interact with other cultural manifestations. This will ideally point to the new creative journeys that intercultural musical theatre might take, generating new material that responds to merging cultural identities and contributing to the cultural dynamics of collaboration and exchange. I hope that this investigation will prove of interest to both scholars and practitioners of musical theatre, as *The Copla Musical* offers a practical model to address cultural exchange in musical theatre practice. In response to the intercultural theatre models articulated by Pavis and Lo and Gilbert, this project offers practical solutions to artistic problems including musical translation, cultural negotiation and socio-political engagement between dominant musical theatre traditions and indigenous forms like *copla*.

What follows is an attempt to create practice that stands as both methodology and output, as a way of investigating both a specific musical form and its evolution in a different cultural context. The thesis is written in dialogue with the practice, whose remains are documented through the links and scripts provided.<sup>14</sup> I hope that this project allows for a discussion of how musical forms travel and what the journeys mean for both performers and audiences who are familiar and unfamiliar with the contents depending of their location and cultural background.

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<sup>13</sup> Many cabaret artists are recognized for exposing their own lives and personality through their art: some classic examples include Edith Piaf, Josephine Baker or Marlene Dietrich. More contemporary cabaret artists include Meow Meow and Taylor Mac.

<sup>14</sup> The thesis is further accompanied by the finalised scripts of all three PaR shows as well as audio-visual documentation of the practice that I referenced earlier in this introduction.

Findings from the project have already been disseminated both through the practice<sup>15</sup> and through the publications that are listed on page 2 and in the bibliography.

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<sup>15</sup> The practice has been presented at the following festivals and venues:

- ***The Copla Solo***: CENIT, Seville, Spain (2017), ISTF Danail Chirpansky, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria (2017), FIT Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia (2017), Rosemary Branch Theatre, London, UK (2016), Barcelona Solo Festival, Spain (2016), York Music Theatre Festival, UK (2015), Collisions Festival, London, UK (2014).
- ***The Copla Cabaret***: Mercado Gorbea, Vitoria, Spain (2017), Collisions, London, UK (2015).
- ***The Copla Musical***: 2013, Roundhouse, London, UK (2013), Collisions, London, UK (2012-3), Hoxton Hall, London, UK (2011).

## CHAPTER 1: POSITIONING *COPLA*: FRAMING *COPLA* WITHIN MODELS OF SPANISH AND ANGLOPHONE MUSICAL THEATRE

### 1.1 LABELLING THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SPANISH MUSICAL THEATRE

Musical theatre in Spain has developed interculturally under the influence of foreign imports like Italian *opera buffa* or French comic opera. The first manifestations of musical theatre found in Spain date back to the Middle Ages, when music accompanied religious worship with a tendency towards theatricality. Liturgical acts and representations like the popular *Canto de la Pasión* (Easter Passion singing) dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> century might be considered forerunners in the combined use of music and drama, but the main exemplar of Spanish musical theatre history is the Zarzuela, a well-known and representative Spanish musical theatre genre popularised by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as a popular response to the monarchic impositions of foreign genres during previous centuries.<sup>16</sup>

‘Zarzuela’ has historically represented a diversity of subgenres (including opera, operetta or musical theatre), loosely branded under this umbrella term. This trademark became even more prominent at the beginning of Franco’s fascist dictatorship (1939-1975), when every Spanish art form was forced to adhere and represent the socio-political ideals of the regime. For the purposes of this thesis, I am going to provide a brief historical account of the history of Spanish musical theatre responding to the established categories of Zarzuela, *revista* and the ‘global’ musical, to be able to reflect about the crossovers of these wide genres with *copla*, the main object of this study. However, I am aware of the problems that this classification entails. There is an ongoing debate about the labels that have marked the framing of musical theatre in Spain, which according to scholars like Ignacio Jassa Haro create confusion and become a trap to understand musical theatre works (2018). When studying the development of Spanish music theatre in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Spanish scholars generally use the term *revista* to classify the post-civil war works that best fit the descriptors of musical theatre in relation to the American canons, while the term Zarzuela is often applied to more lyrical, operatic works during the same period. However, there are many crossovers between both genres and this distinction between *revista* and Zarzuela is not always useful, as many musical theatre works labelled under these brands often have very different characteristics.

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<sup>16</sup> For more information about the origins of musical theatre in Spain, see Fernández Cid (1975).

Enrique Mejías García argues that the Spanish musical theatre of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is often studied from an operatic and solely musicological perspective and not from a more cultural position as it is the case, for instance, with American musical theatre (2014). Therefore, Spanish Zarzuela is often labelled as a ‘minor’ genre in comparison to foreign opera, which has historically resulted in Zarzuela suffering an inferiority complex (Mejías García 2014). This is primarily because comparisons to opera are set on musical and not cultural grounds. Mejías García, Jassa Haro and a current body of international scholars<sup>17</sup> propose the rediscovery of deserving works of Spanish opera that, wrongly labelled as Zarzuela, have been largely erased from cultural histories of musical theatre.<sup>18</sup> Post-1939, Spanish musical theatre works became more concerned with representing a Spain that was typified according to Franco’s political agenda, distancing itself from the social realities of the time while reminding audiences that Spain was ‘different’. European authors who visited Spain were rarely influenced by Spanish musical theatre works because of their national specificity, which posed a strong commercial barrier to internal dissemination. Some composers like Pablo Sorozábal displayed influences from their coetaneous American composers of the time (George Gershwin, Irving Berlin),<sup>19</sup> however, historical surveys have tended to consider the qualities that differentiate Spanish and American works rather than those that bring them together.<sup>20</sup> For these reasons, at the end of the chapter, I will try to put in context some Spanish musical theatre manifestations (with a focus on *copla* songs) in relation to some American coetaneous works. I will point out that there were also moments of cultural crossover within Spain, and that the shared popularity between Zarzuela and *copla* at the beginning of the Francoist regime has not been explored in full. For example, both Zarzuelas and *copla* songs were broadcast through radio and sold as slate records, and shared a crossover audience. I will explore later in section 1.2.4 of this chapter how the characteristics of *copla* and the regime’s strategy in cultural manipulation led to establishing a lasting memory of *copla* songs, whereas most Zarzuela post-war titles have fallen into oblivion. There are however more than 10,000 Zarzuela titles registered in SGAE<sup>21</sup> of which it is calculated

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<sup>17</sup> Such as Richard Traubner, Christopher Webber, Andrew Lamb and Kurt Gänzl, or Celsa Alonso, Mario Lerena, Tobias Brandenberger, Alberto González Lapuente and Antje Dreyer in Spain.

<sup>18</sup> For further development of these ideas, see Casares Rodicio (2002) and Mejías García (2014).

<sup>19</sup> For example, Sorozábal’s *La isla de las perlas* (1933), and most especially its revival of 1946 had parallels with the aesthetic and style of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *South Pacific* (1947).

<sup>20</sup> Most historical accounts of the Zarzuela analyse the genre as separate from other international art forms, with the exception of scholars like Celsa Alonso, who connects the early Broadway musical comedies with the Zarzuelas and *revistas* of the same period (2014), or Alberto Mira who compares the figure of the cupletista with the figures of the Vamp, Torch Singer and Flapper in American musicals (2004).

<sup>21</sup> *Sociedad General de Autores y Editores*, the Spanish equivalent to PRS (Performing Rights Society).

that more than 300 of these achieved a considerable level of success during the dictatorship.<sup>22</sup>

### 1.1.1. The Zarzuela and its forerunners: opera and *tonadilla escénica*

The Zarzuela is a lyric-dramatic genre that has married music and theatre in Spain for over three hundred and sixty years, and has widely represented Spanish cultural patrimony abroad. The Zarzuela combines operatic and popular song and dance with spoken word and evolved from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, known as the Baroque period of Zarzuela, to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Romantic period of Zarzuela (Fernández Cid 1975). The Zarzuela originated from the inclusion of musical numbers into what was known as *teatro breve* (short theatre pieces) during the reign of Felipe IV (1621-65). With the support of Spain's nobility, it became an established convention in Spain. The first Zarzuelas were not totally sung,

they were intended as court entertainments, divided into two acts, but most importantly, they consistently involved a rustic or pastoral setting and characters, and were less serious in tone and dramatic content than the strictly mythological court plays [...] the Zarzuelas seem to have included more comedy than other court plays (Stein 1993: 261, in MacCarthy 2007: 28).

With the setting to music of *sainetes* (comic sketches) and *entremeses* (short farces) that combined sung and spoken sections and musical interludes, the Zarzuela took its name from King Felipe IV's Zarzuela palace in Madrid where they were initially performed (Lamas 2012: 195). Zarzuela then moved into public theatres, with song and dance fused into a sort of variety show. Early Zarzuelas were frequently based on mythological themes and legends, as with *El golfo de las Sirenas* ('The Mermaid's Gulf', 1657) and *El laurel de Apolo* ('Apollo's Laurel', 1658), both by playwright Calderón de la Barca and based respectively on Homer's *Odyssey* and Ovid's *Metamorphosis*.<sup>23</sup>

The popularity of 17<sup>th</sup> century Zarzuela declined with the invasion of Italian music that occurred with the arrival to the throne of the Bourbon dynasty in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the love for all things foreign in intellectual circles was manifest in encouraging reactions to Continental counterparts of musical theatre such as Italian *opera buffa*, French *opera comique* or German *singspiel*. Spanish

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<sup>22</sup> For instance, *La Blanca doble* ('The Double Blanca', 1947) celebrated more than 400 performances (Jassa Haro, 2018).

<sup>23</sup> For further information on the origins of Zarzuela, see Lamas (2012) and Fernández Cid (1975).

popular music became marginalized from the intellectual life of the country as the idea of singing in Spanish on stage was considered a monstrosity by Baroque moralists with strong prejudices against popular music. The Enlightenment elite stigmatized Zarzuela's supposed lesser merits (Lamas 2012: 194). The new monarch Felipe V (1700-46) preferred music sung in Italian since he knew little Spanish when he was crowned king, and Zarzuela was thus substituted by imported operas. Zarzuela tried to adapt to the Italian model but failed to please court audiences. King Fernando VI (1746-59) contributed even further to enhancing Italian opera against Spanish Zarzuela. It was only with his successor, Carlos III, who was not seduced by Italian music and had a taste for Spanish *costumbrista*<sup>24</sup> entertainments, that there was a shift in musical theatre on the Spanish stage. Italian influence still dominated the lyrical art, but Spanish artists tried to bring a flavour of national identity and popularized the idea of *costumbrismo* through the renewal of a prior genre, the *tonadilla escénica*. According to Lamas, the success of Zarzuela throughout Spanish history has derived from its ability to mirror the growing nationalist sentiment of the capital's urban audience, thus becoming a major expression of the new social consciousness (2012: 196). The rekindling of the *tonadilla escénica* exemplifies this process.

Until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, music had always been present in theatre as an integrated part of the drama (as with opera and Zarzuela). The *tonadilla escénica* changed this pattern, being a type of song independent from the drama that was performed during the intermissions of large-scale shows, evolving into the genre known as *variedades* (variety). The *tonadilla* was born as a four-part choir that was performed prior to theatre comedies as a musical prologue to the main play. Members of the theatre company sung short popular stories with picaresque context for which they were not required to have exquisite singing voices or indeed any musical background. Singers were accompanied by Spanish guitars and a bass, and the focus of these performances was mainly on the acting. Given the popularity of these prologues, the *tonadillas* started to be performed also in the intervals, and eventually they evolved into short scenic interludes. The first opened at the Teatro Municipal de Madrid in 1757: *Una mesonera y un arriero* ('A Waitress and a Mule Driver'), by Luis Misón, what we would today consider a short musical comedy. The *tonadilla escénica* was considered a minor lyrical-dramatic genre and showcased popular and social customs in farcical, humorous ways – much like the spoken *entremés* and *sainete*. Plots were simple, emphasizing character over action. Entertainment was balanced with social critique and moral leanings, a forerunner of future song forms like *cuplé* or *copla*.

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<sup>24</sup> Rafael Lamas defines *costumbrismo* as literature of social customs and manners (2012: 199).

The *tonadilla* was born as a protest to the cultural invasion of Italian opera, but as Zarzuela enjoyed a new Renaissance at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it took *tonadilla*'s place as the preferred entertainment of the popular classes. Royal protectionism kept opera as the domain of the elite, with initiatives undertaken to protect opera against Spanish *costumbrista* genres like the Zarzuela and *tonadilla escénica*'s rising popularity.<sup>25</sup>

The boundaries between Zarzuela and Italian opera were tested; composers invariably described their works as opera or Zarzuela, problematizing the distinction between the two genres. By the end of the century a proto-nationalist discourse had permeated Spanish musical theatre culture, and King Carlos IV decreed by Royal Order in 1801 that all foreign operas had to be performed in Spanish (MacCarthy 2007: 33).

During Napoleon's occupation from 1808 to 1814, Italian opera was effectively side-lined by the new promotion of French comic opera in an unsuccessful attempt to institutionalize this genre, but by 1830 the dominance of Italian music effectively put an end to French operetta in Spain. Many Spanish composers created scores for Italian texts, in the belief that music could only be expressed in the language of *bel canto*. Zarzuela was unable to generate the prestige that might have attracted a younger generation of composers. Without government support, Zarzuela struggled to acquire financial profitability during hard economic and political times (Lamas 2012: 195).

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, various tendencies in musical theatre coexisted in Spain: Spanish translations of Italian and French operas; Spanish scores attached to foreign texts; and the development of new musical theatre materials directly in Spanish. A series of conditions led to the expansion of the latter tendency which resulted in the consolidation of Zarzuela (Fernández Cid 1975: 25). The success of Italian music inspired many Spanish composers to aspire towards a regeneration of Zarzuela, with nationalist convictions regarding the preservation of cultural identity propelling further this movement. Zarzuela was able to integrate the different musical styles of Spanish regions by producing multiple versions of itself. In 1847 a group of composers (including Eslava, Arrieta, Gaztambide, and Barbieri) as well as baritone Francisco Salas founded the musical association 'España Musical' to request

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<sup>25</sup> The elevated costs of performances forced a switch from support by the nobility to the patronage of the middle class, shifting Zarzuela from the elite to the popular sphere. In follow up to this shift and existing criticisms from the Church, intellectuals like Jovellanos (1744-1811), Tomás de Iriarte (1750-91) or Leandro Fernández de Moratín (1760-1828) attacked popular musical theatre and labelled Zarzuela a genre of bad taste, denigrating its audience as a social mob lacking in education and aesthetic sensibility (Lamas 2012: 196). This parallels how *copla* came to be seen by some intellectuals during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

government support for Spanish opera, a genre that they argued would place Spain at the same musical level as other European countries. While the government rejected the request and the elite continued to align with Italian opera, the members of *España Musical* prompted and realigned with the resurgent Zarzuela (Lamas 2012: 198). Testimonies of composers like Barbieri, Bretón and Fernández Caballero defended the importance of Spain's indigenous cultural music against Europe's cultural influence.

Barbieri: The spirit of our (Spanish) popular songs must always float in the music, which is very logical and possible because in the whole of Europe there is no other nation which has the variety and rich sources that we (Spain) have.

Bretón: National opera is in the national language.

Fernández Caballero: There will never be Spanish operas if the composers that create them follow the footsteps of the Italian, French or German schools (All cited in Fernández Cid 1975: 39).<sup>26</sup>

In 1830 the Conservatoire of Queen María Cristina was established; here students wrote and performed Zarzuelas that helped raise the profile of the genre. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the word Zarzuela had acquired common currency and high-profile composers like Barbieri wrote and popularised what are now recognised as masterpiece Zarzuelas like *Pan y toros* ('Bread and Bullfighting', 1864) and *El barberillo de Lavapiés* ('The Little Barber of Lavapiés', 1874), mainly three-act pieces with complex music and libretti inspired by 18<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish history. The Zarzuela soon became the primary music theatre genre in Spain, experiencing a golden age in the period between 1875 and 1910. In 1850 the Teatro Real opened, financed by the government and disproportionately dominated by Italian composers and impresarios. Just six years later, the Teatro de la Zarzuela was built as a specific home for the genre, further consolidating its growing importance. Some composers like Arrieta persisted in pursuing Spanish opera, but soon realised that competing with Italian composers did not generate the same profits as composing Zarzuelas, which started to provide substantial financial dividends to those who reworked the genre to satirical ends. Spanish Zarzuela artists opted for the development of cheaper pieces with smaller infrastructures and more in tune with the political atmosphere preceding the 1868 revolution, such as *El joven Telémaco* ('Young Telemaco', 1866). These were

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<sup>26</sup> Barbieri: 'En la música deberá siempre flotar el espíritu de nuestras canciones populares, lo cual es muy lógico y posible porque no hay en Europa nación alguna que tenga de ellas tanta variedad y tan riquísimo caudal como nosotros'.

Bretón: 'La ópera nacional está en el lenguaje nacional'.

Fernández Caballero: 'No son ni serán jamás óperas españolas si los compositores que las creen siguen las huellas de la escuela musical italiana, alemana o francesa' (all cited in Fernández Cid 1975: 39).

performed in new Zarzuela venues like the 'Bufos Madrileños' (Madrilenian Buffoons), which opened in 1865 and soon became the key venue for the lyrical-grotesque works it pioneered. Its founder, Francisco Arderius, a comic actor, director, producer, pianist and impresario intended to replicate the success of 'Les Bouffes Parisiennes', bringing to Spain the grotesque parodies that had proved so popular in the French capital.<sup>27</sup> The venue hosted new Zarzuelas in this style, like Caballero's *Los sobrinos del Capitán Grant* ('Captain Grant's Nephews', 1877), or Chapi's *El rey que rabió* ('The King Who Raged', 1981). This trend within Zarzuela translated the great romantic drama into the vernacular, making it accessible and understandable to audiences and performers within a mid- to lower class demographic. A new theatrical form developed from this new trend, the *género ínfimo*<sup>28</sup> in which songs were independent of the dramatic plot. The content of these picaresque pieces was risqué, featuring sexualized female performers disguised as half-naked nymphs, while offering a sly commentary on political events.

By 1875, Zarzuela *grande* (large Zarzuela, the term refers to the three-act pieces with enhanced infrastructures) is in its prime, and Zarzuela *chica* (short Zarzuela) acquires a new level of popularity. The *teatro por horas* (theatre by the hour) emerged during those years, offering cheaper and shorter performances, more oriented to the popular classes, which could identify with the plots of these musical shows. Small platforms and stages were installed in bars and cafés, where pay-per-hour shows proved to be a financial success, allowing several daytime performances. The *género chico* emerged as an alternative to balance the predominance of long Zarzuelas, which would only resume their popularity in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the poor press that greeted its early music-less manifestations, the *género chico* soon evolved into an artistic form with rhyme, musical accompaniment to scenes, and eventually musical numbers, that entirely transformed the Spanish cultural scene, creating a platform for the birth of the *revista* genre a few years later (Lamas 2012: 202).<sup>29</sup> The *género chico* involved a mixture of political satire, social controversy and popular tunes. In Rafael Lamas' words:

The overlapping of cultural entertainment, politics and elaborate business practices gave *género chico* the impetus to become the undisputed cultural

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<sup>27</sup> A line of scholars led by Matilde Muñoz condemned the manifestations of France's boulevard theatre as gaudy and tasteless: 'El arte francés del Segundo Imperio adolecía de una trivialidad chabacana y chocarrera, de puro sello bulevardero' (1946: 131). The French art of the Second Empire suffered from a tasteless and vulgar triviality, of pure boulevard theatre signature.

<sup>28</sup> A popular type of cabaret theatre with risqué features, mainly sung by female artists and men in [drag](#).

<sup>29</sup> The reader can find out more about the context of the early *género chico* in Lamas (2012: 202) and Fernández Cid (1975: 98-99).

cornerstone of the Spanish fin-de-siècle and gave rise to the modern notion of culture as industrial enterprise in Spain [...] *Género chico* mobilised spectators as never before, transforming the way musical theatre was created, distributed and consumed in Spain. It was a phenomenon of industrial proportions which forced other cultural entertainments to adjust (2012: 205-206).

The popularization of *género chico* was in part based on a formula that merged satire, humour and, from the 1930s onwards, doses of eroticism. To maximize financial returns there was an obsession with reducing costs, which led to a fall in production standards. The alarming decline in quality, particularly regarding music, meant that the elaborated *género grande* experienced a revival from the late 1910s to the beginning of the Civil War (1936), where the genre began its final decline (Lamas 2012: 207). During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *sainetes* (short farces) and *revistas* (revues) replaced Zarzuelas *grandes* and *chicas*, which lost popularity and momentum. The decline of Zarzuela coincided with the rise of cinema, which in Spain began with the filming of Zarzuelas by Segundo de Chomón (1871-1929) in 1910. Film prompted a shift from live performance to recordings of Zarzuela (Lamas 2012: 207).

During the Francoist dictatorship, less musical theatre works were labelled as Zarzuela. While some authors and composers like Francisco Alonso<sup>30</sup> and Jacinto Guerrero<sup>31</sup> sought stylistic renovation in their works by looking at musical theatre influences coming from America, others like Moreno Torroba vouched for a return to Spanish traditional aesthetics, in a current known as *neo-casticismo*. Nevertheless, all these composers and most of their contemporaries were strong conservatives, and so were their creative works. In the biography of Moreno Torroba by Walter Aaron Clark and William Craig Krause (2013), his works are categorised in relation to his nationalist values: from a vindication of Spanish national identity in his best-known Zarzuelas *grandes* (*La Chulapona* and *Luisa Fernanda*), to his post-war works including minor Zarzuelas and guitar concerts. Moreno Torroba's works displayed elements of *neo-casticismo* such as *alambrismo*<sup>32</sup> which were encouraged by Franco's fascist regime. Even the works of more liberal composers like Pablo Sorozábal<sup>33</sup> are influenced by this

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<sup>30</sup> Celsa Alonso González defends the modernity of Francisco Alonso and his attention to American standards to attempt a renewal of the stylistic canons of 20<sup>th</sup> century Spanish musical theatre, despite his fascist inclinations (2014).

<sup>31</sup> Enrique Mejías García compares the similarities of style between Guerrero's work and his American influences (2007). Guerrero's pieces managed to adapt these American references despite Spain's cultural isolation. His works, however, did not travel to America.

<sup>32</sup> Also known as *andalucismo*, an ornamentation consisting of Andalusian clichés such as melisma, Phrygian scales, and other folkloric features.

<sup>33</sup> In the case of Sorozábal, his more musically sophisticated works like *Black el payaso* (1942) were still labelled as Zarzuela whereas they could actually belong to the description of opera. Only now some of his

political exploitation process that framed the Zarzuela as a musico-theatrical genre in tune with the dictatorship's values.

Zarzuela had difficulties gaining a place in theatre companies' repertoires, given the difficulties and high cost of their productions. International productions were almost non-existent. In 1946, Matilde Muñoz considered that Zarzuela was destined to oblivion; librettists at that time were focusing on simpler forms like modern comedy sketches, with easier productions and cheaper modest costumes (Muñoz 159). Muñoz affirms that Zarzuela did not find a way to reinvent itself as a means of survival and eventually faded away, making room for new forms of entertainment. At present, Zarzuela is treated as 'high art', which creates a disconnection with the idea of popular entertainment and social impact that once differentiated it from opera. The only performance space that offers full-year seasons of Zarzuela is Teatro de la Zarzuela in Madrid; Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu features occasional performances but Madrid's Teatro Real opts largely for an opera programme. Although relatively few new Zarzuela has been composed since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, some directors like Calixto Bieito and Lluís Pasqual have provided innovative productions of period works, showing how the genre can be dramaturgically pruned and re-contextualized to offer theatrically innovative social commentaries for the contemporary age (Lamas 2012: 209).

Zarzuela is now considered a genre of musical theatre almost exclusively associated with Spain. It differs from opera through the inclusion of spoken scenes, but mainly through populist themes that historically attracted a lower-class audience. However, authors like Arrieta considered that the name Zarzuela deeply hurt the development of comic opera in Spain:

Zarzuela is no more no less than opera with spoken scenes, what in France is called Comic Opera and has been cultivated throughout many years, without the French lamenting about this sort of spectacle that in Spain is qualified as hybrid and unworthy to be called art by those who should instead respect it (Arrieta, in Fernández-Cid 1975: 51).<sup>34</sup>

The rise of Zarzuela needs to be seen in relation to the position of opera in Spain, for Zarzuela drew on and was nourished by its competition with opera. Each art

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works are categorised as such and presented in lyrical and operatic contexts, but they were originally framed as Zarzuela for political motives (Lerena 2018).

<sup>34</sup> 'La Zarzuela es, ni más ni menos, que lo que en Francia se llama ópera cómica, es decir la ópera con escenas habladas, como se viene cultivando muchos lustros [...] sin que a nadie se le haya ocurrido lamentarse de esta clase de espectáculos, calificándolos de híbridos e indignos del arte, como aquí lo hacen los que más obligados están a respetarlo' (Arrieta, in Fernández-Cid 1975: 51).

form was associated with a different audience demographic: opera in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was viewed as an upper-class entertainment where nobility gathered to be seen, while Zarzuela with its urban tales of popular folk triumphing over adversity animated lower class audiences. While opera's influence waned in Madrid in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century leading to the closure of the Teatro Real in 1925, Zarzuela was celebrated as an indigenous art form and enjoyed a cultural capital in Madrid which continued through the early decades of the Franco regime - for the dictatorship was keen to promote a vision of Spain rooted in national art forms like the Zarzuela.<sup>35</sup> Its adaptability and its ability to spawn smaller siblings, like the *género chico* helped it adapt in ways that opera could not.

The Zarzuela has nowadays crystallised in a series of canonical works mediated by the discographic industry. From 1950s, works were reedited and re-recorded with operatic stars like Montserrat Caballé, Teresa Berganza or Plácido Domingo, and a selection of works regained popularity. This selection of restricted repertoire rarely includes post-war titles, with Zarzuelas written during the dictatorship having a limited influence. Broadway may have continued producing new works of musical theatre that alternate with revivals of established works. Zarzuelas in Spain are recuperated from a historical perspective and often are only revived if popular knowledge can guarantee a certain level of financial security: producers will only invest on the shows that the population know and therefore it is the same Zarzuela titles that have passed in to the history of Spanish musical theatre.

The roots of the *revista* that I will deal with the next section owe much to the forms of musical theatre pioneered by Zarzuela. Zarzuela is currently considered a Spanish art form that requires government's support and preservation – with the Teatro de la Zarzuela being one of the Spanish state's most generously subsidised theatres: Lamas argues that 'the genre has exhausted its own creative means and now remains a historical relic' (2012: 193). However, it originated interculturally as a response to Italian and French operatic imports and bears the imprints of a range of theatrical and musical styles. This sets a precedent for newer explorations in musical theatre, such as the intercultural experiment that constitutes the Practice-as-Research component of this thesis.

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<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, Barcelona's opera house the Gran Teatre del Liceu became the centre of opera in Spain. Maintained by private shareholders it offered a different model to Madrid's Teatro Real and functioned as a powerful venue for international trends in opera production, as with the 1955 visit by the Bayreuth Festival. For further details, see Alier (1999).

### 1.1.2. The *revista* (revue)

In 1886, a Zarzuela called *La Gran Vía* initiated a renovation of this Spanish genre, making a transition towards what we widely regard as 'musical theatre'. Its authors defined it as '*revista-lírico-fantástica-callejera*' (lyrical-fantastical-streetwise-revue). The four words contained in this title anticipated the new upcoming genre (revue), but still clarified the preservation of style (lyrical) and reaffirmed its popular orientation (streetwise). The 1880s witnessed a veritable increase in popularity of the so-called minor theatre forms (*género chico*, *sainetes*, vaudevilles and other farces and sketches set to music). The *revista* (revue) was born in Spain in the late 1880s as a genre that offered political and social news through caricature; these were comical vaudeville plays with musical numbers that often had little relation to the plot of the piece. Revues and operettas with their zappier, pacier rhythm became the favourite type of show of audiences who were tired of the long, repetitive plots of Zarzuela. Musical theatre became a source of income for many authors and composers alternating the writing of Zarzuelas with *revistas*.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Barcelona audiences showed little interest in the Madrilenian 'born-and-bred' revues, so Catalan artists developed their own particular style that resembled the Parisian model and style of variety, incorporating female nudity and extravaganzas. The early revues were thus born with influences from the French *género ínfimo* (racy genre), taking place at smaller cabaret clubs before slowly expanding into larger-scale theatre venues. By that time, the Zarzuela was in clear decline, its audience opting instead for the incipient revues. The *género ínfimo* pieces had a different format, non-linear narratives and featured diverse artists from different disciplines (singers, dancers, and actors). As the genre developed, connecting plots between the musical numbers were written; these were light and of minor importance since the popularity of these shows was based around the spectacular nature of new musical numbers, involving extravagant choreographies and lavish effects.

In post-Civil War Spain, racy revues had replaced the big romantic Zarzuelas in popularity, however they had to confront the obstacle of the new regime's censorship that opposed to any sexual innuendos or political mockery of the new government and its rules. The erotic *cuplé*, wildly popular in the 1910s and 1920s gradually gave way to more 'respectable' variety shows. In an inspired business initiative, lead actress and impresario sympathetic to the new regime, Celia Gámez, proposed a new musical comedy formula that she defined as Zarzuelas *cómicas modernas* (modern-comical

Zarzuelas) to keep both censors and audiences happy. Her initiative was in part a response to the proliferation of musical comedies, considered to be ‘something American’, and a real threat in times of political and cultural autarchy (Patterson 2010: 18). *La Cenicienta del Palace* (‘Hotel Palace’s Cinderella’, 1940) was considered by some to be the first musical comedy with characteristics from the Spanish revues from before the Civil War such as *Las Leandras* (1931), or *La pipa de oro* (‘The Golden Pipe’, 1932). The borrowed characteristics included *costumbrista* themes and folkloric tunes. The new approach was determined by a sense of spectacle and solemnity inherited from other European and American productions of the time (Montijano 2010: 129).

The censorship introduced at the end of the Civil War prohibited any reference to these works as ‘revues’ because of the political associations of the term – the authorities had concerns about the potential of racy jokes to ridicule the regime and its values and so authors renamed them to avoid potential problems. As such, they came to be known as ‘*humorada cómico-lírica, pasatiempo cómico-lírico, Zarzuela cómica-moderna, operetta cómica*’, etc. (Modern Zarzuela, lyrical-comic entertainment, or comic operetta...) – just a few of the many combinations of terms that defined this increasingly popular genre (Montijano 2010: 129). With the new imposition of a fascist dictatorship and the censorship imposed upon the *revista*, a new cultural movement in the 1940s known as the ‘empire of folklore’ came to encompass all theatre shows that included folkloric numbers such as flamenco and *copla* songs (these shows will be further explored in section 3.3 of this chapter).

Despite the socio-economic difficulties of the time, new revue companies emerged during these years, providing entertainment to suffering audiences who had survived the War.<sup>36</sup> These companies both reprised conservative classics of the genre and staged new and successful revues like *Yola* (1941), or *La Blanca doble* (‘The Double Blanca’, 1947) that co-existed with the newly fashionable *copla* and folkloric spectacles. The 1950s saw a proliferation of the revue productions of the 1940s with little innovation; by the 1960s with the rise of television and the retirement of established stars of the time, lyric performance was undergoing a crisis of identity. The main revue companies kept touring and new composers and librettists appeared, but the quality of the materials decreased progressively. The genre relied on big names but audiences got tired of the *revista*, which in that period ‘seemed doomed to disappear’ (Montijano 2010: 208).

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<sup>36</sup> The Spanish Civil War (1936-39) left Spain in desolated conditions of poverty, autarchy and political persecution with a violent exclusion of the defeated Republicans. For further details, see Preston (2012).

Indeed, the 1960s were critical for musical theatre in Spain: there were less and less openings of new *revistas* and Zarzuelas and operas were primarily restricted to Barcelona's Teatre Liceu. Revues did not have the impact they had enjoyed in previous decades and even folkloric shows experienced a decline. In this musical theatre crisis, modern singers, music hall artists and comical actors compensated their lack of musical technique with some vernacular gestural language that drew on the ways of speaking of the lower classes. This marked a shift in stardom which had, to that point, been attributed to gifted singers rather than actor-singers. Just as is the case with some contemporary mega-musicals,<sup>37</sup> orchestras were reduced in number and electrically amplified with pre-recordings, interpolations, microphones and loudspeakers; and concert galas by popular artists took over the space left by the earlier *revistas*.

With the arrival of democracy in 1975 came great social change: censorship was abolished in 1977; adultery, homosexuality and the sale of contraception decriminalized in 1978, divorce legalized in 1981 and abortion in 1984. The disappearance of censorship affected the development of the revues: female nudity was permitted on stage, new scores recycled hits from the past and plots, even though still funny, became predictable in that they repeated the same patterns (Montijano 2010: 221). According to critic Lorenzo López Sáncho, the Spanish revue became

a book in between the *sainete* (sketch) and a comical toy, musical numbers interpolated without coherence with a plot or narrative, happy music (and modern if possible), girls' and – for a number of years now - boys' ballet ensembles (in Montijano 2010: 238).<sup>38</sup>

In 1975, Fernández Cid complained about the scarcity of new Spanish musical theatre works, lamenting that this could lead to the disappearance of Spanish musical history: 'if this tendency continues, Spanish Musical Theatre will just belong to history' (1975: 196).<sup>39</sup> Zarzuela and *revista* experienced life cycles that evolved with the societies of the times in which they were first performed and popularised, but they did not regenerate as those societies underwent transformation. These genres were linked to a populist reflection of societal archetypes, and being framed by political contexts

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<sup>37</sup> The use of synthesizers has helped reducing the size of orchestras in musicals once 'full orchestration' has been established. For example, the orchestra for Sweeney Todd was reduced from twenty-six instruments in 1979 to nine in the National Theatre production of 1994 (Symonds 2011: 274).

<sup>38</sup> 'Un libro entre el *sainete* y el juguete cómico, números musicales interpolados sin ninguna conexión con texto o argumento, música alegre y en lo posible, moderna, chicas de ballets y –hace ya bastantes años- boys' (Montijano 2010: 238).

<sup>39</sup> 'De continuar este camino, llegará un día en que nuestro teatro cantado pertenezca de lleno a la historia y sólo a ella' (Fernández Cid 1975: 196).

such as censorship, were unable to evolve beyond their imposed restrictions. However, whereas some genres experienced longer lives and developed along with the evolving society (like Zarzuela, which survived a few centuries), others (*revista* and folkloric shows) only lasted a few decades.

With the demise of local musical genres and the new openings offered by democracy in the period after 1975, Spanish producers looked to the USA and the European continent for musical products, identifying an opportunity to catch up culturally with the rest of the world. This turned into a relationship of dependence on imported culture that has proved such a hallmark of Spain's cultural development over the last forty years. Patterson describes the first years of democracy as a period in which Anglophone musicals become a 'mandatory reference' for those who wanted to invest in musical theatre: the new foreign products effectively crippled Spanish musical theatre which was not able to compete with these works, producers unwilling to take the risk of investing in local musicals on a similar scale (2010: 24).<sup>40</sup>

By the mid-1980s, very few revue artists remained; revues had moved to discos, casinos and gay clubs, which altered the form towards an overtly 'queer' aesthetic including political parody, less musical numbers and more choreography. *Revistas* were viewed as passé. As nudity and permissiveness became a feature of the culture of the transition, these shows could no longer claim *risqué* as a unique selling point. Audiences lost interest, and composers, showgirls and comedians moved to other forms of entertainment. The genre effectively disappeared from the Spanish stages (Montijano 2010: 242).

The decline of Zarzuelas and revues called for a different type of show, but with a few exceptions,<sup>41</sup> the influence of the Anglo-American musical had not really fed into the work of Spanish composers as the country's musical theatre mostly had historically fed from regional and popular folklore and rarely established links with the American

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<sup>40</sup> 'El modelo anglosajón va instalándose y convirtiéndose en referencia obligada para todo aquel empresario, autor o compositor que desee hacer una incursión en este género. Sin embargo, eso que a priori parece algo positivo se convierte a la larga en un hándicap importante, ya que algunos intentos de creación puramente nacionales no consiguen pasar el examen y se convierten en experimentos, en evidentes fracasos comerciales la mayoría de las veces, lo que obviamente frena el desarrollo normal de la posible demanda y genera baches que evidencian el temor del empresario a equivocarse y sufrir pérdidas irrecuperables' (Patterson 2010: 24).

<sup>41</sup> Namely, Jacinto Guerrero's *Loza Lozana* is a Zarzuela from 1943 that has points of contact with the aesthetics, staging and sense of spectacle of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* from the same year. Guerrero insisted though on the importance of exhibiting the Spanish type, and if *Oklahoma!* presented an all-American drama with cowboys and farmers, *Loza Lozana* would place a chaste and traditional love story in Castilian Toledo (Mejías García 2007: 72-75). Additionally, composers like Francisco Alonso are defended for their stylistic modernity in tune with the incipient American musical, even though the contents of his works are considered conservative and in tune with the fascist ideology of the dictatorship (Alonso González 2014).

stage musical. Even though the first American musical import took place in Spain in 1955 when director José Tamayo directed a version of *South Pacific* at Teatro de la Zarzuela, the shift only fully materialized in democracy through the spread and availability of Anglophone pop music, appealing to a new younger generation of spectators that has bought into the idea of spectacle (Patterson 2010: 27).<sup>42</sup> It is this same generation who will support and even press for the establishment in Spain of the global musical.

### 1.1.3. The (global) musical

The new constitution of 1978 moved away from centralization policies pursued by Franco's regime and implemented a policy of political autonomy. Difference was more readily recognized. Spain opened its doors to foreign influences and this deeply affected the development of musical theatre. British and American musicals translated into Spanish versions, progressively establishing themselves with audiences and so serving as growing commercial enterprises. According to philologist Marta Mateo, the first mega-musical import production to Spain was *Jesus Christ Superstar* (Madrid, 1975). This became a huge success,<sup>43</sup> followed by other hits: *Les Misérables* (1985, produced by José Tamayo, Plácido Domingo and Cameron Macintosh), *El diluvio que viene* ('After Me the Deluge', 1996), *West Side Story* (1997) and also a few flops, such as *A Chorus Line* (1984). Musical still competed with a few revues and Zarzuela revivals that still remained in the nation's collective memory, such as *Vaya par de gemelas* ('What a Pair of Twins', featuring popular artist Lina Morgan, 1981-83), and anthology *Mamá quiero ser artista* ('Mom I Want to Be an Artist', featuring popular artist Concha Velasco, 1986), last revue successes of this decade before the genre completely disappeared from the Spanish stages leaving compilations as its only remains (Montijano 2010: 259).

The background in which musical imports proliferated was not always favourable, as musicals were initially seen as '*americanadas*' (typical American things). 1974 saw the creation of Dagoll Dagom, a Catalan company and first theatre company in Spain almost entirely dedicated to the creation and production of musical theatre. Its own productions of *Antaviana* (1978) and *Mar i Cel* ('Sea and Sky', 1989) enjoyed

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<sup>42</sup> 'El relevo se ha materializado a través de lo que llamamos música pop. Interesa a la juventud que, reconociendo canciones muy populares, se deja atraer por la magia del espectáculo' (Patterson 2010: 27).

<sup>43</sup> 'The show opened at the Teatro Alcalá-Palace in Madrid on November 6, 1975, and it was a massive hit, both in terms of public reception of the show and of its star. (...) After a successful run of almost five months and over 400 performances, the show closed on March 28, 1976' (JCS Zone 2018).

good audience support, and positioned the company as a reference in the creation of Spain's autochthonous musical theatre. But the company combined the production of new musicals with the production of some imports such as *Evita* (1981) and *The Mikado* (1986).

A milestone in the importation of musical theatre in Spain was *Man of La Mancha* produced by Luis Ramírez at the Teatro Lope de Vega in Madrid in 1997. It became a phenomenal success with an average daily audience of 1400 people and an estimated box office profit of 400 million pesetas (approximately €2.5 million) in the first six weeks of its run. Because of popular demand, the musical was brought back to Madrid in 2004 and toured in 2005. Following this success, producer Ramírez acquired the rights to produce the Broadway hit *Grease* in 1999, to demystify the popular saying that Spain 'could not do musicals' (Mateo 2008: 324). Other producers like José Tamayo also attempted to bring mega-musicals to Spain by dedicating some theatre venues like Teatro Apolo to the exclusive production of musicals. This idea did not quite work during the 1980s, but it has nowadays become a reality as theatre venues such as Lope de Vega, Coliseum, Rialto, Calderón or Nuevo Alcalá are almost entirely turned over to the production of stage musicals. At the turn of the century, a group of producers intended to turn Madrid's Gran Vía into a reproduction of New York's Broadway. Since then, Madrid has become second only to London as the European capital which produces the largest number of musicals (Mateo 2008: 327). This has involved the upgrading of venues like the Lope de Vega and Coliseum theatres so that they are able to host the complex sets that are part of the visual thrills of the mega-musical. Nevertheless, only a very limited number of foreign productions reach the Spanish stages when compared to the development of musicals in London and New York, partly due to the lack of infrastructures and technologies and partly because Spanish audiences are still somehow new to this musical theatre tradition.

Following the globalization trend that has ruled musical theatre in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Spanish productions have increasingly resembled their Anglo-American originals. Since 2003, starting with the Spanish production of *Cabaret* at the Nuevo Teatro Alcalá in Madrid, many of the creative teams from musicals in London and New York travel to Spain to recreate their original productions. In the case of some musicals, such as *Victor Victoria* (2005) and *The Producers* (2006), translations of the scripts were altered to appeal to local audiences. The gap between the productions' original year of production and their transfer to Spain started to shorten as it is the case with John Rando's Broadway hit *The Wedding Singer* (2006); Rando himself directed the Madrid production in Nuevo Teatro Alcalá in 2007, one year after its Broadway

premiere. The musical vogue in Spain reflected the return of the popularity of 'spectacle' which had been such a part of Zarzuela's appeal. Other factors to take into consideration are the recognition of these musicals as previous hit movies, the collaboration of celebrity singers and actors (such as Raphael, who starred in 2000 in the Spanish musical version of *Jekyll & Hyde*). A big name can help with initial sales and interest, but once a musical is firmly established, less famous actors or singers may take over, as it happens as well on Broadway and the West End. It is interesting to note that some factors that help building the popularity of musicals abroad, such as the Tony Awards, are not regarded as universal and do not have a direct effect on the scheduling of musicals in Spain (Mateo 2008: 333).

Broadway musicals came to fill the gap left from other previously popular genres such as *revista* or Zarzuela. The new and imported musicals provided light entertainment, an emotional experience and technical and artistic quality, presenting stories that were not associated with traditional Spanish life (Mateo 2008: 332). As had happened in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Spanish homegrown productions found growing difficulties in competing with the increasingly well-established international imports. Impresarios increasingly pursued the adaptation of foreign shows instead of investing in the development of national materials (Patterson 2010: 24). Contrary to what happened at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the rise of Zarzuela in a rebellion against operatic imports from France and Italy, Spain's youth demanded new styles of music and theatre coming from abroad, effectively wanting to forget about anything related to the long years of the dictatorship.

Data from 2005 reveals that more musicals opened in the first five years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century than throughout the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century: musicals are becoming a cultural and touristic asset to Spain's largest cities (Patterson 2010: 26). The decline of Zarzuela was due to a lack of innovation during the dictatorship. Instead, early developments of Spanish musical theatre fed from regional types of folklore and from popular music with influences from Latin America and central Europe. But Spanish stage music never related to jazz, pop or rock (as Anglo-American musicals do). These styles entered the Spanish cultural spectrum through the discographic rather than the theatre industry. However, a takeover has now materialized through the popularization of jukebox musicals<sup>44</sup> that follow the formula of successful imports like *Mamma Mia*, playing in Spain since 2004, in which the audience identified the songs and bought into the spectacle as a result of this process of identification. This has led to a further step

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<sup>44</sup> These are musicals made of previously released songs that are already popular. More about the jukebox musical will be explained in detail in section 1.3.3.

in the history of the Spanish musical: the creation of Spanish jukebox musicals, pioneered in 2005 by *Hoy no me puedo levantar* ('Today I Can't Get Up') that features the songs of 1980s iconic band Mecano.

*Hoy no me puedo levantar* was a game-changer, the first musical to challenge the dominance of imported musicals in the Spanish theatre box office, and the trailblazer for a new collection of Spanish jukebox musicals that have emerged, spread and popularized to this date. With an initial budget of eight million euros, it was able to compete with the imported musicals with its high production values.<sup>45</sup> The success encouraged the production company, Drive, to produce a children's version of the musical, *En tu fiesta me colé* ('I Sneaked Into Your Party', 2005), which also became a commercial success with over 70,000 spectators performing only one matinée per week. This followed the lead of a recent boom for musicals for young people such as homegrown *Antígona tiene un plan* ('Antigone Has a Plan', 2004) or the foreign imports *Annie* (2000) or *101 Dalmatians* (2002). The production of *Hoy no me puedo levantar* was identified as a national response to the success of other international jukebox musicals in Spain like *Mamma Mia* (2004) and was successfully advertised as 'finally a musical in which you'll be able to sing all songs' (Fouz-Hernández 174).<sup>46</sup>

Risk and lack of continuity in musical theatre initiatives are ongoing in Spain in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Anglo-American imports have established their market and national attempts have arguably become experiments mostly reliant on nostalgia, as with *Hoy no me puedo levantar*. Spanish audiences currently tend to attend theatre shows that anticipate commercial success through high profile marketing campaigns and/or popular actors attached to the opening run. It is difficult for a show without any of these elements to be noticed by a big audience. Successful musicals in Spain are either produced by franchises in Madrid such as Stage Entertainment, currently responsible for the most conspicuous musical theatre success in Spain thus far, *El Rey León* ('The Lion King'), showing in Madrid since 2011 with over 3 million spectators, the longest running musical in Madrid's Gran Vía, or its principal competitor SOM Produce, a new company created from the merger of Drive and Vertigo. These companies now tend to focus on the production of musicals that have been tested abroad, or that have

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<sup>45</sup> Its success can be mapped in commercial terms: a million spectators saw it in its first four seasons, with shows playing to a capacity of 85% or above. The casting processes for this show were widely advertised in all media, generating a high level of expectation. Tickets were sold at 70€, a price well above average at the time in Spain, and the formula proved so resonant that *Hoy no me puedo levantar* was exported to Latin America, becoming a huge success in Mexico with more than 400 shows in 2006 and revivals in 2014 and 2017. A 2007 Mexican tour expanded to other Latin American countries and later to the USA and Northern Europe, making it the first contemporary Spanish musical theatre production to be transferred abroad (Fouz-Hernández 2009: 173).

<sup>46</sup> 'Por fin un musical en el que podrás cantar todas las canciones' (Fouz-Hernández 174).

strong associations to Spanish popular culture, such as the Spanish Jukebox musicals pioneered by *Hoy no me puedo levantar* and followed by *Quisiera Ser* ('I'd Wish to Be', 2007) with songs by Dúo Dinámico, *Es por ti* ('It's Because of You', 2010) with songs by Cómplices, *Más De 100 Mentiras* ('More Than 100 Lies', 2012), with songs by Joaquín Sabina or *Marta tiene un marcapasos* ('Marta Has a Pacemaker', 2012) with songs by Hombres G. There are also smaller productions that have achieved a solid degree of success in Spain like Tricycle's adaptation of the Monty Python's *Spamalot* (2008) or *The Diary of Anne Frank* (2008), the first Spanish musical theatre adaptation from a well-known literary source. There have also been significant fringe autochthonous productions that have achieved a significant relevance through various runs, either within Spain as with *Por los ojos de Raquel Meller* ('Through Raquel Meller's Eyes', 2006-13) or internationally, like *Pegados* ('Stuck', 2010-14). Also, many established Spanish theatre companies have produced shows throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> century that combined music and theatre, even though they are not always considered musical theatre by the most dogmatic definitions. A few examples are the revival of *Mamá, quiero ser famoso* ('Mummy, I Want to be Famous', 2005) by La Cubana; *Pagagnini* (2007) by Yllana; *El nacional* ('The National', 2011) by Els Joglars; *Perséfone, Variaciones mortals* ('Persephone, Mortal Variations', 2011) by Els Comediants; o *Time al tiempo* ('Cheat the Time', 2011) from the relatively new company Ron La La.

The growing popularity of musical theatre led in 2007 to the creation of the Gran Vía Musical Theatre Awards to recognize the labour and excellence of musical theatre produced in Spain, even if largely from imported sources. British and American musical imports have shifted the focus in the Spanish production of musical theatre from composers and librettists to directors, but most especially to performers. Musical theatre actors became growingly recognized and very much in demand, as many new imported musicals required all-round performers that could cope with the demands (singing, dancing, acting) of the new shows. Therefore, a proliferation of drama schools offering a combination of training in these three areas also opened a competitive market for education in this area. Even national drama schools like RESAD (Royal Superior School of Dramatic Arts) have implemented the musical theatre strand since 2011, which has grown in demand year after year.

In summary, the coexistence of opera and Zarzuela through centuries facilitated the intercultural influence of opera in the creation of a national Spanish musical theatre genre. The Zarzuela *chica* transitioned into the *revista*, a genre that evolved throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century into a 'non-integrated' Spanish musical comedy. The *revista* ended up

becoming a variety spectacle with political commentary and racy content that faded in the late 1990s due to loss of audience interest and disappearance of professionals. *Revista*, like Zarzuela, are largely Spanish genres in content, created in response to the intercultural influences that existed in Spain at the time of their inception. Neither significantly incorporated foreign themes, elements or ideas. A shift took place with the arrival of the global musical to Spain. A series of imported shows have progressively conquered the Spanish market by bringing to Spain something not seen before: non-Spanish narratives integrated in music, in tune with the current tastes of society, that had previously enjoyed international recognition. This form of escapist entertainment was often based on powerful nostalgic draws, but also helped transporting Spanish audiences to new scenarios non-available to them throughout the dictatorship. Anglo-American musicals even provided a revolutionary formula for Spanish musicals to develop: the jukebox musical. But there is still another genre key to the history of Spanish musical theatre: the variety shows that emerged from Zarzuela and *revista*, and that showcased Spanish folklore like flamenco dance together with comic sketches, and most importantly to the focus of this thesis, *copla* songs.

## **1.2. WHAT IS COPLA?**

### **1.2.1. Terminology: the coining of the genre**

There is a strong controversy about the use and origin of the term *copla* when referring to a specific song form that was used in some musical theatre practices at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Defined and renamed during Franco's dictatorship as 'Spanish song', 'Andalusian song' and 'folkloric song', there is an ongoing debate in which many musicologists, historians, academics as well as musicians and theatre practitioners have not yet agreed on how to name this Spanish musical theatre song form from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Reina 2009: 15).

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Antonio Machado Álvarez (also known as Demófilo) systematized the study of flamenco, creating a frame to support the rise of an up and coming folkloric song genre that became known as *copla*. In 1881, Demófilo founded the Society of Andalusian Folklore and created a book collection named *Biblioteca de Tradiciones Populares* ('Library of Popular Traditions'). Inspired by this initiative, other academics founded other Spanish regional academies and published their own collections documenting oral traditions in Galicia, Castile, Catalonia, Extremadura, etc. Demófilo also contributed to the science of study of flamenco,

named *flamencología*, by publishing a collection of *cante flamenco* (Flamenco singing) to which musicians like Manuel de Falla, Granados, Albéniz and Penella contributed. This amalgamation of folkloric pieces, some of them by Falla, Lorca, Alberti and other internationally recognized authors of the period, facilitated the conditions that led to the incubation of the first *copla* songs.

The name *copla* comes from the Spanish medieval literary tradition. *Copla* in literature referred to a poetic form used since the 18<sup>th</sup> century that rapidly popularized shifting authorship to an oral tradition. Because of its direct colloquial language, *copla* poems quickly popularized and started being sung, becoming part of traditional and popular songbooks. Despite the genre's long heritage as a poetic form, it mainly flourished as a song form in the 1940s. The newly popular song form shared popular inspiration and oral transmission values with its previous poetic manifestations dating from the Al-Andalus period (711-1492) through to the Middle Ages, the Golden Age, and on through the 18<sup>th</sup> and into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In some cases, both literary and sung *copla* shared the meter. These poems were recurrently supported by flamenco music, which accompanied the rhymes with musical rhythms, measures and styles, such as 'zambros, soleares, tarantos, tangos, bulerías, etc.' (Reina 2009: 25).

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, poets and authors of Generation of 1927<sup>47</sup> like Federico García Lorca collected popular ballads and transcribed Andalusian songs, fusing the popular forms with highbrow poetic forms such as Surrealism to create new poetic manifestations. *Copla* lyricists like Rafael de León followed those ideals in the writing of their *copla* songs, developing *copla* as an ingenious hybrid of high and low poetic forms (Sieburth 2014: 46). However, *copla* songs became inundated with Andalusian folkloric references and pronunciation, and even more associated with provincial and populist themes. Consequently, the genre started being renamed as *canción andaluza* (Andalusian song) as Andalusia became an archetypical and exportable image of Spain that was used to stimulate the tourist industry.<sup>48</sup> From the early 1960s onwards, the government promoted an image of Spain as beach, sun and Spanish folklore. Regional forms of folklore were enveloped into the dictatorship's vision of Spain. Flamenco became synonymous with Spanish culture. By the same

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<sup>47</sup> A generation of poets fascinated by popular poetry, Andalusian folklore and *cante jondo*. They considered the so-called *copla* folkloric form an opportunity to combine poetry and lyricism with music, delving into themes of popular tradition as inspired by poetic current *neopopularismo* and educational current of Free Teaching *krausismo*, that focused on addressing villagers and popular classes and elevating the lyrical standard in the art forms (Reina 2009).

<sup>48</sup> 'In the early 1960s, a turnaround by the dictatorship of General Franco represented decisive confirmation of the alliance signed with the United States in 1953. (...) This was the period of the regime's so-called diplomatic and economic 'apertura' (opening), with the most visible effect being the development of tourism as the country's top industry' (Museoreinasofia.es 2018).

token, some national forms that originated across Spain (like *copla*) became forcefully attributed to Andalusia.

For some historians like Manuel Román, there is a difference of meaning between the terms *copla* and Spanish song: the first portrays dramatic stories while the second one just praises national feelings. Often, however, both terms are used indiscriminately. Nevertheless, *copla* did not originate exclusively in Andalusia but in equal measure throughout the whole of Spain, and this attribution to Andalusia generated confusion, which led to some regions refusing to identify with authoring the form. The terminological confusion is still present in Spain, and comes from mixing the origins of flamenco and folkloric songs attributed to the Arab and Hebrew heritage in Andalusia dating back to the times of Arab domination under the reign of Al-Andalus. The mixing of the influences of Andalusia and Al-Andalus gave the regime another excuse to attribute *copla* to Andalusia, converting it into an exportable and representative image of Spanish culture (Reina 2009: 22). Regrettably, today people still associate *copla* with Andalusia. One of the aims of my project *The Copla Musical* is to de-localize the artistic form through an intercultural exchange and let it exist beyond its regional and national associations.

### **1.2.2. Definition and features**

*Coplas* are Spanish popular songs with an average duration of three minutes in which theatrical self-contained narratives structured around a beginning, middle and end are sung. Stephanie Sieburth defines *copla* as

an amalgam of popular, mass and high-cultural genres that united new forms with traditional ones. *Coplas* were simultaneously poetry, narrative, music, theatre, and sometimes dance. They drew on traditional folklore but also on the highbrow poetry and classical music of the twentieth century, which themselves had appropriated popular forms. Thus, the post-war *copla* was an exceptionally rich middlebrow compendium of traditions dating back many centuries in several genres (2014: 46).

In the literary tradition, *copla* was a poetic form of four-line stanzas with assonant rhyme in the even-numbered lines with a meter made of 7-8 syllables per line. This form had been the means of expression and historical memory of what Spanish novelist and essayist Manuel Vázquez Montalbán terms the ordinary people of Spain since the Middle Ages (2000), and was transmitted orally like Christmas Carols, storytelling romances and flamenco poems. Literary historians Josefa Acosta Díaz,

Manuel Gómez Lara and Jorge Jiménez Barrientos establish a distinction between literary and musical *copla* by defining them in relation to each other:

*Copla* is a joint of verses also called *cuarteta asonantada* that consists of a metric structure of four octosyllabic verses with an assonant rhyme in pairs. [...] The *copla flamenca* [term they use to distinguish the song form from their literary origin] is maybe the deepest expression of this popular form and the songs that we are talking about are a direct heritage of it (Acosta Díaz, Gómez Lara and Jiménez Barrientos 1994: 38).<sup>49</sup>

We could add to the above description different formats of *coplas* with various metric structures, such as *cuarteta* (stanzas of 4 octosyllabic verses with assonant or consonant rhyme between second and fourth verses, that is the metre of the romances or ballads) and *seguidilla* (same structure but second and forth verses are shorter, normally 5 syllables versus 7 on the longer verses). Other forms of *copla* are only found in Andalusia because of their close relation to flamenco music: *soleá* (the blues) and its variation *soleariya*; the *alegrías* (happiness) and *playeras* (moaning) and *seguirillas gitanas* (gypsy seguidilla) (Brenan 1995: 153-158).

*Copla* songs find their first musical foundations in folkloric forms like *pasodoble* and the flamenco tradition of *cante jondo*,<sup>50</sup> and are mainly differentiated from those musical forms by their theatrical quality. The main difference between *copla*, flamenco and other folkloric songs is that *copla* songs must have a narrative structure with a clear beginning, middle and end. Lyricist Rafael de León once stated that each song must have the structure of a play (Román 1993: 27). Sieburth too sees the *copla* in theatrical terms as:

a miniature play acted out in song on a stage. [...] Its structure is as follows: first stanza, refrain, orchestral bridge, second stanza, refrain. Each song presents an initial situation, a conflict, and an ending that does not necessarily solve the problem (2014: 47-48).

Etymologically, *copula* means union or tie and signifies the composition-union of verses, not to be confused with the current English words 'copulation' or 'copulate'. The Latin word comes from *co-apulare*, derivate on the Latin verb 'copulare', which traditionally meant to tie or unite. This storytelling song, a genre of sung-drama,

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<sup>49</sup> 'La copla es en principio un tipo de estrofa también llamada cuarteta asonantada y que responde a la estructura métrica de cuatro versos octosílabos que riman en asonante los pares y quedan libres los impares. (...) La copla flamenca quizás sea la expresión más profunda de esta forma popular y las canciones que ahora tratamos son herederas de esta' (Acosta Díaz et al. 1994: 38).

<sup>50</sup> Andalusian flamenco tradition made of four-line verses and typically sung in taverns to the accompaniment of the guitar (Acosta Díaz et al. 1994: 37).

became popular and spread in little time. Poet Manuel Machado, son of Demófilo, wrote in one of his poems: 'las coplas, coplas no son hasta que el pueblo las canta' (*copla* does not become so until is sung by the people), which makes a point of the importance of the popular interpretation and transmission of the genre (Reina 2009: 25).

Musically speaking, *copla* songs can be accompanied minimally by just piano, or fully with an orchestra. The guitar mainly remains a flamenco instrument although it is also used in some *copla* songs with closer formats to flamenco. Composer Manuel Quiroga combined the traditions of Spanish Zarzuela, flamenco rhythms and tunes and Spanish classical music of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (as with Manuel de Falla, Enrique Granados, Isaac Albéniz) generating a synthesis with which a whole generation identifies (Acosta Díaz et al. 1994: 41). *Copla* in its larger-scale form incorporates orchestral textures recognizable in various regions of the Mediterranean: the Balkans, Turkey, and the Middle East. In some pieces, *copla* shows a common modal element that occidental music normally loses when accompanied with occidental-tuning instruments that avoid modality (BNE 2009: 36). The depth of the stories told in *copla* songs is frequently camouflaged with a vocal lightness. The *copla* is frequently associated with the female voice. The less habitual male voice is normally found in its upper register. It is commonly acknowledged that *copla* singing does not require special virtuosity but acting talent, the ability to tell a story through the performance of song.

The themes in *copla* songs varied due to the different interpretations given to poems throughout their oral transmission. *Copla* gets its inspiration from old *Romances* that originated to enhance popular Spanish traditions and landscapes, for religious reasons, to tell everyday stories of love, jealousy, and disillusion, or to protest against the abuses of power, which suggests it was potentially a radical form since its early developments. From the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, *copla* became a new standard form written by poets, evolving from popular storytelling that transferred orally from town to town, into new poetic compositions set to music that incorporated popular sayings and expressions, predominantly a rural world transported to an urban scenario of theatre and radio. The world that poets like Rafael de León created 'seemed remarkably familiar, typically Spanish, as though it had always existed' (Acosta Díaz et al. 1994: 45). Songs started featuring taverns, *cafés cantantes*, palaces, ports, prisons, weddings, soldiers, sailors, bandits, smugglers, bullfighters, aristocrats, etc. Many *copla* songs praise the beauties of Spain, its villages and towns, its food; other songs express the philosophy of old proverbs; they also offer political and religious

commentaries. But the main theme used in *copla*, and the most successful, is love, or the lack of it: 'the most famous *coplas* were sad and bitter stories, of fallen women who had lost their true love, or penniless men down on their luck and without social support' (Sieburth 2014: 3). For British Hispanist Gerald Brenan, *copla* songs are ideal to express 'only one feeling given their conciseness, but they express the idiosyncrasy of a situation rather than a character's state' (1995: 145).<sup>51</sup> Amorous themes in *copla* include partner, filial and maternal love, heart-break, jealousy, abandonment and betrayal.

There are also *copla* songs with a strong social critique and songs that portray stories of individuals marginalized by society, such as prostitutes and immigrants (BNE 2009: 12). *Copla* could be considered the first 'protest song' of Spanish society. Indeed, part of the appeal of the *copla* lies in the breadth of its subject matter from love to death, traditions to fate, prison to exile, bullfighting and gypsy culture. *Coplas* are often articulated from a woman or 'other's' point of view, giving voice to the marginalised. Meta-music also features with songs commenting on music, port cafes, cabarets, etc. These songs are distinguished by a position that empowers women – this was especially pronounced during the years of the Second Republic where writers empathized with rights such as divorce or free sexuality, that later resonated in songs like *Compuesta y sin novio* ('Dressed Up and Without a Groom', 1944). But even during the dictatorship the songs empathized with the abuse that women suffered, especially since that abuse applied to other collective groups such as homosexuals, intellectuals, or representatives of other marginalised or denigrated ideologies, which included most of the *copla* authors. A few examples can be found in songs *Tatuaje* ('Tattoo', 1941), *Ojos verdes* ('Green Eyes', 1937) or *La bien pagá* ('The Fairly Paid', 1933-36) in which prostitutes narrate their stories in the first person. Despite the Francoist dictatorship's attempts to control and censor *copla*, these songs still managed to protest poetically, showing solidarity with minorities. The moral in these songs generally ensured unfortunate consequences for their protagonists, which satisfied censors but also allowed for empathy and identification of social minorities. Performers sung consistently about the mean gossiping, mediocrity, hunger, poverty, persecution and abuse that took place in post-war Spain, for instance in the song *Campanera*, made famous in 1956 (Reina 2009: 43).

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<sup>51</sup> 'La copla, por su concisión, es idónea para expresar una emoción, un sentimiento y no más. [...] Sin embargo, ninguno de estos poemas es personal, es decir, expresan más la idiosincrasia de una situación que la de un personaje' (Brenan 1995: 145).

### 1.2.3. Origins and background

As I mentioned earlier, the origins of *copla* are an ongoing topic of discussion, in which intellectuals and academics position themselves supporting various perspectives. Literary critic and essayist Rafael Cansinos Assens challenges the belief of *copla*'s origin as exclusively popular, and suggests a mixture of erudite and popular influences consisting of popular singing artfully composed by a poet. In Cansinos Assens' opinion, *copla* mediates in this sense between art and life, which turned the form into a cultural phenomenon in Spain (1985: 36). For Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, *copla* emerged as an artistic manifestation that originated from three interrelated fields: traditional lyric, popular lyric and spectacle (2000: 12). He describes 'traditional lyric' as an ensemble of anonymous songs orally transmitted in communities. These became 'popular lyric' when the community used those songs to express collective memory, consciousness or states of animosity (prior to the emergence of mass media). 'Spectacle song' was born in the Golden Age theatre as a component of Renaissance comedies, and its popularity increased during the Neoclassic period, giving place to the popular *género chico* or small Zarzuela.

Researcher Antonio Zoido looks at *copla*'s origin and background from a perspective of *Andalucismo*. He attributes *copla* an origin in Andalusian folklore and argues that because of it, *copla* has been marked by a stigma of prejudice that has complicated its study and its proclamation as an artistic form in a similar way to Zarzuela or *revista*. He points out that from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, many performers portraying comical roles in Spanish musical theatre spectacle have incorporated Andalusian accents, as American theatre performers initially used blackface and Jewish vocal mannerisms as comic tools that became conventions of the form. A century later in Spain, and coinciding with *copla*'s date of birth, those performers, their topics and their songs had become a stereotype of Andalusia, which was accepted and praised by some audiences as a convention, but rejected by many others who wanted musical theatre to develop away from stereotypes, especially when those stereotypes have no scientific base (Zoido 2002: 11-13).

Prior to the rise of *copla*, the spectacle songs that filled many Zarzuelas between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries also acquired relevance and popularity by being performed outside the frame of the theatrical piece, dissociated from comic or dramatic situations, and sustained by the grace, ability or sex appeal of its singers or performers. Cultural historian Serge Salaün writes of multitudes of audiences attending the same theatre shows to sing along the songs they already knew, and who kept singing them even while exiting the theatre (in Zoido 2002: 85). Salaün has extensively

researched the *cuplé*, a musical theatre song form that is the inheritor of the French *Couplet* and a forerunner of *copla*. *Cuplé* songs portrayed two kinds of themes: the romantic, which was presented through elegant music and language and directed to the upper classes; and the *risqué*, which was more popular and formulated with middle class audiences in mind. This latter form of *cuplé* connected with the *género ínfimo* (racy genre). *Cuplé* was only performed by women, but written, composed, and seen by men, who were the main audience of these shows.<sup>52</sup> Many shows would have a burlesque style in which the female performers would strip down to show parts of their anatomy. The romantic *cuplé* developed in elegant saloons among the upper classes, where singer Raquel Meller became internationally popular, performing in L'Olympia in Paris and Carnegie Hall in New York.<sup>53</sup> In this manner, *cuplé*, also known as *tonadilla*, gave popularity to singers, like Pastora Imperio, who later became important figures of *copla*. This resulted in the naming of the first *copla* singers as *cupletistas* or *tonadilleras* (Reina 2009: 23).

The French *Couplet* was an indisputable leader in revues and cabaret shows from the final years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the late 1920s. The arrival from France of the *cuplé* was potentially another intercultural form that informed the incipient *copla*. By the end of 1920s, popular variety shows slowly replaced *cuplé* songs with *copla*. At this stage, the *cuplé* had lost its French heritage and contained the essence of the subsequent genre, *copla*. The *cuplé* was an extremely popular form throughout the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the growing enthusiasm for flamenco and the European currents of orientalism helped project *copla* outside the niche Andalusian flavours that were attached to it.<sup>54</sup> A few *cuplé* singers included in their repertoires flamenco-style songs that spoke of their homeland, their landscapes and their customs and traditions, totally separated from the original French-based *cuplés*, both in the lyrics and the music. *Copla*'s relation with flamenco metrics, forms and music would also contribute to the 'andalusia-tion' of the genre, by which non-Andalusian performers like Raquel Meller or Concha Piquer would sing flamenco meters using Andalusian ornamentation and accents. As a result, a strong controversy developed between those who thought the purity of traditional flamenco art was becoming endangered by a process of 'gypsy-

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<sup>52</sup> According to Antonio Arévalo García, there were no women in the audiences, only men: artisans, countrymen and some of a more distinguished professions, farmers and landowners of olive groves or cereal sowed fields: 'mujeres no había entre los espectadores. Todos eran hombres; artesanos, gentes de campo y alguno que otro de profesión más distinguida, labrador o propietario de olivos o tierras de pan llevar' (Arévalo García and Castejón y Martínez de Arizala, 1947: 324-325).

<sup>53</sup> Press release: La 'Señorita Raquel Meller' ocupa la portada de la revista TIME el 26 de abril de 1926; sin 'eñe', pero con peineta y mantilla (BNE 2002: 31).

<sup>54</sup> Orientalism is favoured by the growing zeal for flamenco and its plaintive tones: 'el orientalismo tiene a su favor el creciente fervor por el flamenco y por sus tonos quejumbrosos' (Zoido 2002: 124).

fication' and those who supported the open development of *copla* and its star-performers, seeing an opportunity to break free from the ancestral impenetrability of Andalusian singing in favour of a new even if imperfect expansion (Brenan 1995: 37).<sup>55</sup> In 1929, the staging of the show *La copla andaluza* at Madrid's Teatro Pavón became such a success that it transferred later on that year to Barcelona's Teatro Victoria exceeding 100 uninterrupted performances, quite an accomplishment at the time. This variety show, written by Pascual Guillén and Antonio Quintero, spoke of Andalusian traditions and featured a number of flamenco songs. Until then, flamenco had been confined to taverns, but *La copla andaluza* marked its official move into theatre venues. This show marked the beginning of a variety genre that openly celebrated Andalusian customs and folklore, and opened a door to portraying a clichéd vision of Spanish identity that has been accused of being fake and far from reality,<sup>56</sup> but it also marked the start of a long-lasting relationship between theatre performance and *copla* songs.

#### 1.2.4. Historical evolution

The first identified *copla* song is *Suspiros de España* ('Sighs of Spain') dating from 1902, with music by Antonio Álvarez Alonso and lyrics by José Antonio Álvarez (Reina 2009: 28). The music of this *copla* song has the structure of *pasodoble*, a musical form inspired in the rhythms of military marches. *Suspiros de España* became an inspiration for other authors to write further *coplas* and *pasodobles*, such as Manuel Penella, who included a *pasodoble* performed by *copla* star Concha Piquer in his opera *El Gato Montés* ('The Wild Cat') in 1916, obtaining such success in Spain and Mexico that it transferred to New York having previously received more than 2,500 performances (ibid). Once in New York, the show ran for ten consecutive weeks at Winter Garden and transferred to the Park Theatre.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, musical theatre shows in Spain were changing, and the influence of the *cuplé* encouraged the popularization of a new indigenous style mixture of flamenco, popular song, Andalusian folklore and Zarzuela. In 1931, variety star La Argentinita recorded a series of popular Spanish poems that her friend, the poet Federico García Lorca, had gathered in his travels through

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<sup>55</sup> For further information about the popular origins of *copla*, I refer to Gerald Brenan's study of 'Popular Spanish *Copla*' (1995) in which he explores *copla*'s folkloric roots, its literary origins, and lists the published works by various collectors that compiled and analysed popular chants and poems and classified them as precedent and influential to *copla*. Further works that deal with the origins of *copla* include Zoido (2002), Cansinos Assens (1988), Román (2000), Ruiz Barrachina (2008) and Reina (2009).

<sup>56</sup> An accusation that extended to some authors like the Álvarez Quintero brothers.

Andalusia, Extremadura and Castile and set to music.<sup>57</sup> In 1932, just after the establishment of Spain's Second Republic, Lorca and La Argentinita decided to tour across Spain with a series of Spanish folkloric scenes, singing and dancing these songs in popular theatre venues. These shows were still framed in the context of variety, where songs that started to be known as *coplas* interpolated with dance ensembles, comic routines, flamenco guitar playing and poetry recitals. Variety shows were based on a star system in which a famous performer would sing many pieces from a diverse repertoire, mostly based on Andalusian folklore and flamenco styles. The performers of songs would become the main attraction of these shows, that would open in Madrid or Barcelona and tour afterwards in the major provincial capitals (Sieburth 2014: 48). Politically speaking, during the Second Republic Spain enjoyed an enhanced level of openness and freedom, a renewed cosmopolitanism and a commitment to tackling class hierarchies.<sup>58</sup> A first and fruitful period of development leading to the Golden Age of *copla* extended up to the beginning of the Civil War in 1936. *Copla* proliferated in theatre shows and popular trios of artists made up of a composer, a lyricist and a librettist were responsible for the success of the genre.<sup>59</sup> But *copla* songs are attributed mainly to the performers that first popularized the songs rather than their authors. Performers also contributed to creating *copla* shows, an idea that resonates strongly with the American musical comedies of the period.<sup>60</sup>

While the Spanish Civil War is viewed as a fratricidal conflict that divided the nation, one of the few things in common between the Rebels (who referred to themselves as Nationalists) and Republicans was the popularity of *copla*. Both factions listened to these songs and had their representatives in their singers: Concha Piquer, Estrellita Castro and Juanita Reina were loyal to Franco and the Nationalists; Miguel de Molina, Pastora Imperio, Carmen Amaya and Angelillo had a strong political affiliation to the Second Republic. In Franco's Spain, many *copla* composers and performers were on the winning side, and the songs were broadcast on the regime's

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<sup>57</sup> Historians like Manuel Román have considered these songs, recorded in the spring of 1931, an exponent of the true popular Spanish song, far from the decadent French *cuplés*, distant also from the clichéd portrayals that prevailed in some Zarzuela *costumbrista*: 'Aquellas grabaciones aparecidas en la primavera de 1931 constituyeron un aire nuevo; fueron el exponente de la verdadera canción popular, tan alejada de los decadentes cuplés' (1993: 17).

<sup>58</sup> Young new artists and creators gathered in port cafes and cabaret clubs for discussions that were not subject to moral or religious constraints: sailors, poets, politicians, aristocrats, prostitutes, artists, foreign visitors came together to watch flamenco dancing, *copla* singing, transvestite acts, comic numbers and/or and poetry readings. Artists like Lorca, Alberti or Picasso were habitual attendees at these events (Reina 2009: 29).

<sup>59</sup> Some examples are Antonio Quintero, Rafael de León, Manuel López-Quiroga, Xandro Valerio, Juan Solano and José Antonio Ochaíta.

<sup>60</sup> In his book, *Unfinished Show Business: Broadway Musicals as Works-in-Process*, Bruce Kirle talks about the performer as co-creator of the early American musical (2005).

radio. The immediate post-war years marked the increase and peak of shows based on folklore, supported by artists and popular figures that knew how to reach audiences, and a series of second-rate actors who would support a popular star (Fernández Cid 1975: 212). *Tonadilla*, *cuplé* and *copla* occupied a privileged place in the audience's taste above dramatic theatre. Musical shows took place in theatres and music halls but also in taverns and cafes that offered song and spectacle. The emergence of these venues had a commercial purpose, which was to showcase folkloric song and dance that had only previously been performed in private (Brenan 1995: 35). Spanish sung theatre always prioritised performers with identity and signature, even if they had only limited vocal ability, specially performers who emphasized the meanings of their songs with mime and prioritized narration and acting over musical embellishments and ornaments.<sup>61</sup>

At the end of the Spanish Civil War, *copla* was renamed *canción española* (Spanish Song), responding to the national-catholic ideals of Franco's fascist regime and pushing away any associations of the term *copla* with the Second Republic. A number of prominent defenders of *copla* were either executed in the war (Lorca) or died of natural causes (Antonia Mercé). Others went into exile (Falla, Miguel de Molina, Alberti, Angelillo). Those that remained in Spain were largely Franco sympathisers and bought into the dictator's vision of culture, as with singer Concha Piquer. As authorship was often attributed to the performers that popularized the songs, the dictatorship judiciously made Piquer, whose fan base included Eva Perón,<sup>62</sup> the ambassador of the genre.<sup>63</sup> Concha Piquer performed on Broadway<sup>64</sup> and was recognized for 'universalizing' Spanish feeling<sup>65</sup> through her international performances. Carlos

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<sup>61</sup> The main star of the show, named *tonadillera* or *cupletista*, was defined as 'an actor who sings, dances and plays the castanets, and speaks with deep born-and-bred expressions' to affirm the national expression against the influences of foreign trends: 'El tonadillero es un actor que canta, baila y hace percutir los palillos o castañuelas, presume del uso en escena de giros rotundos y castizos en el hablar, estiliza lo popular en mudanzas y desplantes, se enjaeza con profusión' (BNE 2009: 41).

<sup>62</sup> Martín de la Plaza notes that Eva Duarte's wedding to Juan Domingo Perón took place in the luxurious home that Piquer owned in the elegant Buenos Aires district of Belgrano (2001: 89).

<sup>63</sup> To this day, Concha Piquer is considered by many the main representative of *copla*. Sieburth states that she was 'unforgettable because of her incomparable ability to act in song; because of her compelling, astringent voice; and because of the tragic stories she told with such emotion' (2014: 3). Concha Piquer's original recordings are readily available today on remastered discs. Many of today's young people, born after Franco's death, know the lyrics to her songs, more than sixty years their creation (2014: 198).

<sup>64</sup> Martín de la Plaza mentions that in her final production on Broadway, she had top billing after Jeannette McDonald, earning a sum of \$2,500 dollars a week for her performance, a huge amount at the time (2001: 33). For details of Piquer's training in the USA during the 1920s and the discipline that she gained from this, see Martín de la Plaza (2001: 111).

<sup>65</sup> Carlos Cano: The work of Concha Piquer is essential to know and understand *copla*, also known as Spanish song. She opened the doors of the biggest theatres around the world to a new way of feeling so 'ours' (Spanish) and universalized it: 'La obra de Concha Piquer es la obra esencial para entender y conocer la copla, la llamada canción española. Ella abrió las puertas de los teatros más grandes de todo el mundo a una nueva manera de sentir tan nuestra y la universalizó' (in Martín de la Plaza 2001: 228).

Herrera compared her association to Spanish song to Edith Piaf and the *chanson française* and Ella Fitzgerald and America jazz: iconic figures associated with specific national art forms (Herrera, in Martín de la Plaza 2001: 232). British news agency Reuters called Piquer ‘the queen of *Copla*’ (cited in Martín de la Plaza 2001: 135). Concha Piquer’s legacy and style was followed in Spain by a series of singers who presented a domesticated image that suited the priorities of the regime, Estrellita Castro, Imperio Argentina, Juanita Reina, Marujita Díaz, etc. (Reina 2009: 55). These performers reinvented *copla* as an expression of race and national (Andalusian) folklore. New shows proliferated, and the appearance of the radio as new mass phenomenon helped with popularizing a genre that kept its ethos of protest, albeit masked under a folkloric disguise.

In 1942, Concha Piquer’s husband, ex-bullfighter Antonio Márquez, gathered the most prolific and successful *copla* writing team to date: librettist Antonio Quintero, lyricist Rafael de León and composer Manuel Quiroga. After mentioning the example of Lorca’s *Las calles de Cádiz*, Márquez commissioned the team to write the most successful *copla* theatre show known: *Ropa tendida* (‘Clothes on the Line’),<sup>66</sup> which became paradigm for all future folkloric shows: a mixture of Andalusian sketches and popular songs, featuring one star who performed about eight *coplas*, alternating with flamenco singers, comedians and so on (Román 1993: 16-19). This established a professional collaboration (Piquer, Quintero, León and Quiroga) that lasted many years, gave birth to many popular folkloric shows and popularized the *copla* songs compiled in them.<sup>67</sup> *Copla* shows would have an average life in Spain of one to two years and would be followed by a tour in Latin America for an extra two to three years (Martín de la Plaza 2001: 198), thus explaining the genre’s appeal across Spanish-America. The opening in Madrid of the show *Ropa tendida* in 1942 marked a new episode in the genre of variety, to an extent that it would not be called *variedades* (variety) any longer, but ‘folkloric show’. This show combined *sainetes* with Spanish songs, but these would not necessarily have a flamenco style. For the first time, a song

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<sup>66</sup> Antonio Márquez’s proposition to Antonio Quintero: Listen, Antonio, you do a kind of theatre that I like. You know the gypsies well and I would like to connect you with Rafael de León and ‘maestro’ Quiroga, whom up until the war have dedicated to write songs, always very successfully. I want you to do theatre. It interests Conchita greatly, and I think it’d be on your interest too: ‘Oye Antonio, haces un teatro que me gusta. Conoces bien a los gitanos y me gustaría entroncarte con Rafael de León y el maestro Quiroga que, hasta la guerra, se han dedicado a hacer canciones, siempre con mucho éxito. Yo quiero que hagáis teatro. Le interesa mucho a Conchita y creo que os conviene a vosotros’ (Martín de la Plaza 2001: 83).

<sup>67</sup> The trio (Quintero, León and Quiroga) established the formula for the Spanish pop song and managed to get their shows recognized financially, persuading SGAE, which handles copyright and royalties in Spain, to categorize their shows as highbrow theatre rather than as mere entertainments (Acosta Díaz et al: 1994: 11).

in the show was inserted in the middle of one of the sketches, which I believe constitutes one of the first attempts towards an interdisciplinary integration of *copla* in a larger theatrical narrative, an integration based on the American models that were not successfully pursued in Spanish musical theatre.

The Spain of 1940s was characterized by the consequences of three years of domestic conflict: bombed cities, poverty, hunger, cold and lack of electricity resources.<sup>68</sup> Franco viewed public entertainment as a privileged tool for indoctrinating the masses in a strategy to 'depoliticize social consciousness' (Sieburth 2014: 32). He planned to enhance a popular folkloric form across both factions to unite the population now under his dictatorial regime. *Copla* sung about passions that provided a mechanism for escaping from the misery, poverty and hunger of those difficult years; *copla* singers were musical icons that the populace could look up to. Manuel Vázquez Montalbán contends that 'a handful of the best songs of the post-war period reflected the lived experience of ordinary people as no other social discourse did' (in Sieburth 2014: 5). In the early 1940s, a time when, as Vázquez Montalbán notes, rural Spain still lacked electricity, some people still sang the new songs in streets on town squares, teaching them to fellow townspeople (Vázquez Montalbán 2000: 13). Songs kept focusing on forbidden love stories, and mirroring Spanish society of the time, in which people attempted to escape misery and attain social recognition by succeeding in show business, bullfighting or soccer (Reina 2009: 53). From the 1930s onwards, radio had served as a powerful instrument in the spread of *copla* songs.<sup>69</sup> At that time, there were very few recordings and only the very rich could afford a gramophone.<sup>70</sup> Radio was key to *copla*'s growth, because it offered a democratisation of culture (BNE 2009: 12):

The genre flourished at a time of transition between the long oral tradition of song in Spain and the advent of mass media; it retained the live aspect of traditional oral transmission while also bringing songs to the radio (Sieburth 2014: 49).

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<sup>68</sup> Sieburth offers a full picture of the post-Civil War situation and the role that *copla* played in society (2014: 16-43). For further details on the conditions of post-Civil War Spain, see Preston 2012.

<sup>69</sup> 'By 1936, 300,000 homes had declared their radios for tax purposes. By 1943, 1,000,000 radio receivers had been officially declared. Crucially, the radio was used both privately and collectively; radio receivers did not spread to the individual homes of the masses until the 1950s. When wealthier families bought a radio, they often opened their doors so that their neighbors could listen as well. It was common to listen to radio in bars, casinos, cultural centers, headquarters of parties and unions, and in the courtyards of apartment buildings, where there was much communal life. This meant people learnt the songs from each other as well as from the radio' (Sieburth 2014: 49-50).

<sup>70</sup> Manuel Vazquez Montalbán points out that songs were not yet consumer objects at the time. Hardly anyone owned a record player and buying records was not a possibility in times of hunger. There was no incentive for radio stations to replace older songs quickly with newer ones (2000: 12).

*Copla* still had a prominent stage presence. Flamenco venues such as Corral de la Pacheca, Corral de la Morería or Torres Bermejas proliferated in the big cities like Madrid and Barcelona. In these stylish venues, founded by artists and their companies, new talents emerged and old *copla* stars met on and offstage. Many of these artists were considered outcasts and people of ‘social danger’ as defined by the Spanish *Ley de vagos y maleantes*<sup>71</sup> (literary law of idle and bad people), some of them having been detained because of their sexual orientation (for instance, the gay singer Miguel de Molina) or intellectual thinking and political beliefs (for instance Republican artists such as Angelillo), which suggests that the regime’s efforts at controlling the form were not entirely successful (Reina 2009: 57).

Film played a key role in the expansion of *copla* through the folkloric movies that proliferated during the dictatorship, turning *copla* performers into celebrities, like Estrellita Castro and Imperio Argentina, who filmed all their movies in Germany. Franco used regional folklore as a tool to legitimize the new state, much as Hitler did in Germany, and they cross-collaborated in the sharing of an infrastructure for film-making. Other folkloric stars approved by the dictatorship included Lola Flores and Antonio Molina who starred in the most celebrated *copla* films of the 1950s, such as *Morena clara* (1954) which included famous *copla* song *Te lo juro yo* (‘This I Swear to You’). An example of the shift of popularity from Zarzuela to *copla* is also evidenced in the Zarzuela film adaptations that are progressively replaced by folkloric films featuring *copla* songs.<sup>72</sup> Even though *copla* songs were not integrated into theatre narratives, they did feature in film scripts, suggesting a closer relationship between folkloric movies and the Hollywood musical comedy than existed between *copla* stage musicals and Broadway musicals.<sup>73</sup> Film musicals became a commercial success with the arrival of sound cinema in 1932, and *copla* recordings undertaken for the cinema helped define the musical format, arrangements and interpretation of the genre (BNE 2009: 31). Also, many recordings and extra material (archives, masters, data, catalogues) registered at pioneer recording companies like Odeon or Columbia from the pre-film years have been lost, so movie musicals have become a strong referent in preserving and representing *copla*’s cultural patrimony.

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<sup>71</sup> The law of ‘vagos y maleantes’ was approved in 1933 to control vagabonds and other considered ‘antisocial’ types at the time by restricting their public exposure and interactions. This ‘preventive’ law was modified during Franco’s dictatorship to repress homosexuality as well.

<sup>72</sup> A significant example is film *Maravilla* (‘Marvel’), a 1957 adaptation from the 1941 Zarzuela by Moreno Torroba in which the music numbers are replaced by *copla* songs performed by popular artists of the time, Pepe Blanco y Carmen Morell.

<sup>73</sup> For further information about the use of *copla* in film, see Woods (1998, 2003, 2004, 2005), Labanyi (2002, 2005) and Vernon (2004, 2005).

From the mid-1960s, Spain became a prominent tourist destination,<sup>74</sup> which brought new people and ideas to the country. *Copla* was then influenced by new international tendencies and styles, like pop and rock. The last canonical *copla* song is considered to be *Un clavel* ('A Carnation') written by Rafael de León in 1971 for singer Rocío Jurado. Prolific *copla* author Rafael de León, who had tired of the genre and its performers, started writing lighter songs (*canción ligera*) for new performers mixing *copla* with pop, more in tune with the European song styles in fashion at the time. With democracy came new possibilities for popularization through television, broadcasting *copla* programmes such as *Cantares*, presented by Lauren Postigo between 1979 and 1981 (Reina 2009: 61).

In the transition to democracy *copla* was dismissed most especially by progressive groups, as a genre associated with the values of the dictatorship as it was broadcast on the regime's radio and performed by stars with Nationalist affiliations.<sup>75</sup> In the post-war years, *copla* songs extolled the national-catholic ideology, celebrating patriotic values and national excellences of any kind, as with *El beso* ('The Kiss') and *Carmen de España* ('Carmen of Spain'). In Catalonia and the Basque Country especially, the songs were unequivocally associated with Francoism's centralist tendencies.<sup>76</sup> Also, rough colloquial expressions or lurid details in songs were generally not authorized by the regime. Many popular *copla* songs had to change their original lyrics to please the regime and fit its criteria, for example, *Ojos verdes* ('Green Eyes') or *Cárcel de oro* ('Jail of Gold'), and this subjugation extended into the 1950s and even beyond. That is why some historians like Alicia García, commissary of the *Copla* Exhibition at the Spanish National Library, speak of a 'prostitution of *copla*' (BNE 2009) during the dictatorship.

In the early 1970s, leading left-wing intellectuals like Carmen Martín Gaité, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Terenci Moix and Basilio Martín Patino started supporting the value of the *coplas* they heard as children in the 1940s. New artists like Carlos

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<sup>74</sup> In 1951 Spain registered one million visitors for the first time, a figure that grew to 2,522, 402 in 1955, 6.113,255 in 1960, 14,251,428 in 1965, 24,105,312 in 1970 y 30,122,478 in 1975 (Data from CSIC: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas: <http://www.csic.es/web/guest/memorias>).

<sup>75</sup> 'Many young people, having heard those songs their whole lives on the state-controlled radio stations, judged the whole genre on that basis. Furthermore, the *copla*'s use of Andalusian pronunciation, musical forms, and characters was considered oppressive by Catalan and Basque singers, whose own forms of expression had been repressed. The peculiarly Spanish *coplas* were also regarded as the supreme expression of an isolationist Spain. In the 1960s, the anti-Franco opposition was internationalist; it preferred foreign music -American and British rock and French protest songs- reflecting its desire for political and sexual freedom and for Spain to reopen its doors to the rest of the world. The *copla* was stigmatized as *españolada*, or Spanish jingoism' (Sieburth 2014: 198).

<sup>76</sup> 'Glorifying Andalusian folklore had been an important Francoist strategy to represent Spain while erasing the Catalan and Basque cultures, which had their own languages and represented a threat to the unified Spain that the Francoists tried to impose' (Sieburth 2014: 52).

Cano defended a rejuvenation of *copla* during the 1980s, singing well-known old *coplas* and writing new songs in the style of the genre. Artists in other media have rehabilitated the *copla*: film director Pedro Almodóvar included *copla* songs in the soundtracks of several of his films; theatre company La Cubana drew on *copla* in their homages to the music-hall revues of companies like el Teatro Chino de Manolita Chen and Teatro Argentina (Delgado 2003: 237). As part of a cultural movement known as *La Movida*, many contemporary artists like Martirio or Paco Clavel revitalized and updated *copla* songs performing 'kitch' versions in their pop-*copla* fusion. Beginning in the 1990s, *copla* commenced a renaissance which continues to this day (2018). The re-valuing of *copla* involved new films that focused on past performers and the conditions of *copla* performance during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as *Las cosas del querer* ('The Things of Love', 1991), *La Lola se va a los puertos* ('Lola Goes to the Ports', 1993) and *La niña de tus ojos* ('The Girl of your Dreams', 1997). A large-scale *copla* mega-show named *Azabache* was created for Seville's Universal Exhibition in 1992, which gathered old and new *copla* stars and enjoyed a significant box office and critical success (Reina 2009: 63). Historical distance and the reframing of *copla* by artists like Almodóvar and La Cubana had allowed for a new positioning of the genre by singers of different political persuasions.<sup>77</sup>

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, new voices are reinterpreting *copla*, fusing it with other music genres like jazz, Latin rhythms, or even pure flamenco.<sup>78</sup> A few jukebox musicals with *copla* as their main theme have emerged in Spain: *Por los ojos de Raquel Meller* ('Through Raquel Meller's Eyes', 2006) written and directed by Hugo Pérez de la Pica, and *Enamorados anónimos* ('Anonymous Lovers', 2008) produced by Javier Limón with Grupo Drive. Some cultural historians claim *copla* is outdated (see Roman 2000), specialists like Reina argue that the genre has renewed itself in a constant exchange between the old and the new, providing an active identification and conscience with Spanish cultural identity. According to the definition given at the Global Conference of Political Cultures in 1982, at UNESCO:

The consciousness of self-identifying historically in someone's physical and historical setting creates an active character of cultural identity because of the tasks of conservation and renovation that it generates. Conservation since we

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<sup>77</sup> 'In 1999 a group of left-wing singers who had become famous in the 1970s for singing protest songs against the dictatorship came together to create an album called *Tatuaje*, in which each artist performed a *copla* from the 1930s or 1940s; the leaders of the musical opposition to Franco had now appropriated the *copla* as their own' (Sieburth 2014: 198).

<sup>78</sup> 'Today performers like Martirio and Miguel Poveda continue the tradition. And Concha Buika, born in Spain to parents from Equatorial Guinea, dazzles audiences worldwide with her performances of *copla*' (Sieburth 2014: 198).

recognize ourselves in it, but also renovation of the outdated that has become meaningless or redundant.<sup>79</sup>

In that sense, it is arguable that *copla* in democracy tried to renovate itself by acknowledging both the new political situation and cultural developments in the nation-state. *Copla* outlived an entire era and is now flourishing again in a very different Spain but its influence outside Spain remains limited. My own Practice-as-Research project, *The Copla Musical*, attempts to explore how a particular body of knowledge on *copla* can be transferred to a foreign setup, identifying any opportunities to merge *copla* with other international art forms or manifestations as a way of exploring the history I have delineated in this chapter, its links to Zarzuela and its relevance as a form of cultural commentary.

### 1.3. HISTORICAL PARALLELS BETWEEN COPLA AND ANGLO-AMERICAN PARADIGMS

The American Musical was an intercultural form at its moment of creation, since its early developments were influenced from various European roots, such as the Comic Opera tradition established in Paris and London, or the Viennese Operetta. These forms experienced a full development in America in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The European influences kept links to their cities of origin and served as models for topics and musical and dramatic conventions, but most importantly, they were ‘used to evoke referentially the same dimension or attribute from the source they were derived’ (Knapp 2004: 19).<sup>80</sup> But the American musical also developed from genuine American forms, which at the time were considered of a lower standard (Knapp 2004: 47) such as minstrelsy, burlesque or vaudeville.

Throughout their history, musicals have addressed the ideals and realities of America and may have suggested both balances and schisms between them. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the effect of globalization revealed an interconnected world in which musicals became increasingly exported, bringing with them their implicit American cultural values. David Walsh defines the musical as

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<sup>79</sup> Conferencia Mundial de Políticas Culturales celebrada en México en 1982, UNESCO: ‘...la conciencia de reconocerse históricamente en su propio entorno físico y social crea el carácter activo de la identidad cultural, por la acción de conservación y renovación que genera. Se conserva porque nos reconocemos en él, se reemplaza aquello carente ya de significado’.

<sup>80</sup> Paris was recalled during ballet scenes, Britain in political satire, and Viennese waltz evoked sexual intrigues and sophistication that were linked to Eastern Europeans.

the theatrical expression of a national and political identity and life; moreover, a national life that largely formed itself and thrived around popular culture, as befits a society that is ideologically egalitarian and formally democratic (1996:1).

This suggests that musical theatre is drama organised in song-and-dance that draws from the contemporary life of privileged and heteronormative white Americans. The history of the musical is of great sociological value, giving insight into the relationship between popular culture and society. In British theatre, there is also a recurrent distinction between art and popular entertainment (where musical theatre belongs according to Walsh).<sup>81</sup> The musical is the most popular form of live theatre in America and Britain today (and increasingly in other countries too).<sup>82</sup> Its success is measured by comparison with other live theatrical and musical genres in terms of commercial profit, as box office records prove. The commodification of American culture has played a central role in the spread of the musical. As Dan Rebellato explains in *Theatre & Globalization*, mega-musicals function through a franchise system that does not just involve acquiring the rights to a show but rather to the entire original production: the set, costumes, direction, poster, and all associated merchandising (2009: 41). This ensures that the same original production can be experienced anywhere in the world; standardization, however, means that the possibilities for responding to place and time are compromised; these musicals cannot generally respond to a specific cultural context as alterations of the original production are not contemplated. Consequently, the international influence of Anglophone culture facilitates the exportation of musicals by somehow collapsing and replacing other cultural systems, which has been the case for Spain during the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Early American musical comedies and Spanish *copla* revues have many similarities; they evolved, however, in opposite directions. Sieburth compares *copla* to American country music based on both genres' storytelling narratives of people down on their luck and in emotional pain, and on the associations of each genre to a particular region (the American south for country music, and the attribution of *copla* to

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<sup>81</sup> For David Walsh, in British theatre a stratification of culture has been institutionalised through a distinction between art and popular entertainment and 'the musical is firmly placed in the latter category' (Walsh 1996: 1). However, the musical, as its form and range have developed, has engaged with opera and operetta and, to a certain extent, revived them and their formats in new and popular ways: 'precisely because the musical is largely a contemporaneous, vernacular and colloquial form it has continuously changed shape whilst simultaneously developing a continuous tradition' (Walsh 1996: 3).

<sup>82</sup> Per data by the UK Government's DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport), in 2013 theatre contributed £5.4 billion to the UK economy. In the same year in America, according to the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, theatres contributed \$7.1 billion. In both cases, the lists of top-GDP theatre productions include a large percentage of musicals every year (full statistics available in [www.broadwayworld.com/grosses.cfm](http://www.broadwayworld.com/grosses.cfm)).

Andalusia) despite both genres being popular all over each of their countries of origin (Sieburth 2014: 44). However, the closest equivalent to *copla* that I can identify in theatre terms are the American musical theatre revues of 1920s and 1930s Broadway that fed from jazz standards and musical theatre show tunes also known as Tin Pan Alley songs. Tin Pan Alley was a sheet music publishing label in New York that popularised many songs by a series of composers such as Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin or Cole Porter. These songs started to fill the early American musical comedies and revues and became an important factor in the genesis of integrated musical theatre. They were influenced by American folk and ragtime just like *copla* songs were influenced by other Spanish folk forms like *pasodoble*, *zambra* and *chotis*. But there are some structural patterns that can be found in both *copla* and Tin Pan Alley songs. For instance, both Tin Pan Alley songs and *copla* show repetition of different kinds (motivic, rhythmic, melodic), as happens with most western popular music. Also, they both use instrumental introductions that anticipate themes from the songs, or evocative melodies to set the atmosphere. Finally, the loose structures of the shows in which these songs featured 'allowed comics and entertainers to perform as co-creators' (Kirle 2005: 20), which applies to early American musical comedies and Spanish folkloric shows. In terms of legacy, *Copla* singers have remained more famous than the shows' authors and composers. Equally, some jazz versions of Tin Pan Alley songs attributed to Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra or Fred Astaire; and performers of both genres still carry their reputations to this date.

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century, authorial leadership began to revert to the author rather than to the performer as narratives became more important than spectacle, and rules regarding structure were progressively created, setting in place a way to build musicals. This shift was associated with intellectual property and copyright laws that ensured authors would benefit from the sales and capital generated by their works. Up to that point, *copla* and American musical comedies had evidenced similarities in how song and narrative are integrated, and both styles were popularized through radio by dissociating from their first dramatic contexts. However, their historical development is different because Tin Pan Alley songs fed the growing industry of early Broadway in a manner unlike the development of *copla* songs, which rarely integrated in any sort of narrative larger than the songs' own. The non-integration of *copla* songs in theatre revues prevented a development of Spanish musical theatre in the manner that the inclusion of Tin Pan Alley songs in musical comedies during the same period facilitated a step towards the evolution of an integrated musical in America.

Book musicals became the paradigm of integration since the arrival of *Show Boat* in 1927. This view assumes the privileging of musicals that look first at the plot and then question how it is supported by the songs (Taylor 2012: 4). With *Show Boat*, the integration of plot and song experienced a first step that consolidated in 1943 with Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*, the epitome of the canonical book musical that benefited from a solid structure and the telling of narrative through text, song and dance. The entire show was a deviation from the expected norm; characters gained more depth as they were developed in both Hammerstein's book and lyrics, and this drew the audience into the story and made them care about the people involved:

musical numbers flow naturally out of the preceding dialogue and action. Not only do they convey and drive the tale, they provide the audience with insight into the characters' lives and thoughts (Riddle 2003: 38).

Tin Pan Alley songs by famous composers of the time like George Gershwin or Irving Berlin were key components of musical comedies; these songs would accompany the storytelling of musicals that started to prioritize linear and coherent narratives. However, it is unlikely that the audience connection established in *Oklahoma!* could have been achieved with the traditional formula of dialogue and action interspersed with loosely related songs and dance numbers. Despite the theatricality of their music, *copla* songs did not integrate into plot-driven shows in the way that Tin Pan Alley songs did. However, *copla* songs formed part of revues and folkloric shows and their self-contained narratives were normally delivered in dramatic ways. Moreover, the afterlife of *copla* continued in their cinematic use, just as Tin Pan Alley songs filled the early Hollywood film musicals. The shared characteristics and similar trajectories (pre-integration) of both forms in different countries provide a platform to argue that *copla* songs could have developed into integrated shows under different conditions.

The integration of song and plot in what is commonly known as 'the book' in American musical theatre generates conflicting views. Theatre historian Scott McMillin specifies in his theory of the 'integrated musical' that 'all elements of a show –plot, character, song, dance, orchestration and setting- should blend together into a unity' known as the book (2006: 1). Historian Peter H. Riddle defines 'the book' as

the overall package of plot, dialog and characterization, and the way in which these elements are combined and interrelated. The actual dialog and lyrics are combined into the working script, called the libretto (2003: 28).

In contrast to Riddle, McMillin also defines book and musical numbers as two distinctive orders of time: the book representing the plot or the action as progressive time which, based on Aristotelian terms, 'moves from a beginning to a middle to an end' (McMillin 2006: 6). In Greek tragic drama, choral numbers already posed the same problem with regards to progressive time by interrupting the 'book time'. However, Aristotle recognized 'the need to incorporate the choral odes into the unity of action' in order to create a whole seamless narrative (ibid). From Rodgers and Hammerstein onwards, lyricists and composers of integrated musicals based their creative choices on linear dramaturgical principles, giving song and dance a dramatic function, which will contribute to developing the story, the characters, or generating a specific mood or theme. Songs are no longer pure entertainment: lyrics are used to describe events, express the characters' feelings or thoughts, or even provide some information through their speech and singing patterns. Characters from now on will communicate drama through music, starting as a continuation of dialogue that will suddenly turn into song. In the trajectory towards the integrated musical, musical theatre academic Millie Taylor defends integration as

a particular construction of materials that implies, among other things, an evolution of musical theatre towards an ever-increasing focus on linear narrative as the defining feature of the combined musico-dramatic text (2012: 4).

In contrast to the book musical, in *The Copla Musical* I use another paradigm of integration widely developed through the last few decades: the 'jukebox musical'. Jukebox musicals are musicals that re-use popular songs that have proven to be successful in other media by placing a selection of them in new settings to contribute to a new plot (Adamson 2013: 4). The idea of using familiar songs in a theatre production was first used in 1728 with *The Beggar's Opera*, considered by some the first musical in British theatre history. The songs in jukebox musicals are contextualized into a dramatic plot, by re-using popular songs in new settings, which allow some awareness and identification. Modern examples of Jukebox Musicals include *Mamma Mia* (1997) featuring ABBA's songs, or *Jersey Boys* (2004) featuring songs from Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons. The formula of the jukebox musicals has proved particularly successful in Spain.<sup>83</sup> These jukebox musicals are widely seen as entertainment

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<sup>83</sup> As explained earlier in the chapter, in addition to the success of *Mamma Mia* and *We Will Rock You*, home grown jukebox musicals such as *Hoy no me puedo levantar* (2004) or *Más de 100 mentiras* (2011), with music from popular Spanish pop ensembles and singers have attracted millions of spectators. For more details, see section 1.1.3.

products with financially driven aims and they are currently the only national mainstream musical theatre alternative in Spain to musical theatre imports.

In my project *The Copla Musical* I integrate pre-released early 20<sup>th</sup>-century *copla* songs into a linear narrative. *Copla* songs, as I have delineated earlier in this chapter (see section 1.2.3), originated in theatre, but were also progressively disassociated from theatre and popularised in other media (first radio, and then film and television), which proved to be the key guarantee for the survival of these traditional songs in the collective memory. It is that popularity that allows the reintegration of these songs in theatre shows and the re-evaluation of their role in the development of Spanish musical theatre: an example of this can be found in Spanish theatre company La Cubana, which has recurrently used *copla* songs in their commercially successful productions as a way to reconnect with past cultural traditions while forging new artistic discourses (a lineage that *The Copla Musical* aims to inherit). Through this project, I am now attempting to bridge a historical gap that took place in America almost a century ago.

By interpolating the self-contained narrative nature of *copla* songs into a new plot, I address the tension of combining the inner story of the songs and the outward plot of the musical that the songs are meant to move forward. But there is an additional element to this project: if this musical was developed in Spain, it would simply adjust to the definition of a jukebox musical, given the potential of these songs to bring personal associations or nostalgia to Spanish audiences who are in tune with their early history. However, *copla* songs are often totally unknown to non-Spanish audiences who cannot relate to any prior knowledge or experience of those songs; so *The Copla Musical* attempts to relate to international audiences by presenting itself almost as a 'book musical', a narrative mechanism that allows the songs to be presented within an appropriate context for an audience in the UK. This brings questions of translation and cultural exchange that are deeply embedded in the creative process. In the following chapter, I will analyse in detail the intercultural processes at play in the development of this practice.

## **CHAPTER 2. ADAPTING *COPLA*: FRAMING THE TRANSLATION, INTERCULTURAL AND QUEER INPUTS IN THE MAKING OF *THE COPLA MUSICAL***

This chapter will identify key theoretical examples that have guided the practical process of creating *The Copla Musical*, and incorporate existing writing on translation theory, intercultural theory and queer theory that combine to form an analytical framework for my practice. As outlined in Chapter 1, this PaR involves the translation and integration of 20<sup>th</sup>-century *copla* songs into a theatre narrative. My practice examines the adaptation of these *copla* songs into a new historical and geographical context. The songs have been rarely translated before, let alone presented in a theatrical context outside Spain. The development of this show has involved the collaboration of an international team which has transformed a culturally and socially charged artistic form into a contemporary theatre production by tapping into the intercultural potential and subversive queer nature of the original material.

### **2.1. TRANSLATION THEORIES: AN INTRODUCTION**

As defined by translation theorist Lawrence Venuti, 'translation is the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target-language reader' (Venuti 2012: 18).<sup>84</sup> New canons, taboos, codes and ideologies will affect the new text in an aim to bring closer together the cultures at both ends of the translating activity. Many translation specialists have also addressed the negotiation of cultural difference. Margherita Laera describes theatre translation as a process that 'involves the constant negotiation and renegotiation of choices which always end up in the blending of target- and source-oriented strategies within the same text' (2011: 214). Sirkku Aaltonen goes one step further by bringing theatre practitioners into the equation and assigning translation a responsibility, warning that 'translators act as mediators between foreign cultures and theatre practitioners when texts are rewritten for new audiences. They are responsible for the choices they make and ought to be aware of their consequences' (2000: 255).<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Venuti specifies further that while 'this cultural difference cannot be fully eliminated, it must however be reduced in favour of intelligibility in the new culture, which in itself offers a new set of creative possibilities' (2012: 18).

<sup>85</sup> For Aaltonen the success of a translation is determined by the target audience. She considers theatre translation a pragmatic act in which the translator must respect the text's integrity, primarily from the

David Johnston, in his volume *Stages of Translation*, explores ‘the conflict between verbal adequacy and theatrical appropriateness’ (Aaltonen 2000: 256). He considers translation as an extension of stage-craft, an integral strand of the multi-layered process of making a play work on stage, and argues that there can be no rules or a prescriptive theory concerning translation for the stage (Johnston 1996: 6).<sup>86</sup> Like Aaltonen, Johnston sees the translator as a mediator in an exchange that might take part through time and/or place, and signals that their ‘vision connects most intimately with their own experience of the world’, therefore implying that this will rarely be neutral (1996: 7).

Venuti talks about aiming for an ‘illusion of transparency’ to ensure easy readability of the original works in the new language (2012: 1). But how can translation make social, political and personal contexts visible in the limited text that is allowed in the poetry of a song? *Copla* songs were mostly written and reached their peak of popularity during Franco’s dictatorship in Spain (1939-75). The meaning that these songs might achieve in 21<sup>st</sup> century England and beyond is unlikely to be charged with the historical references that influenced the creation of the songs. In order to achieve this illusion of transparency, one must question how to convey the contextual messages of these songs, but also reflect on whether they can stand alone outside the context in which they were first created. Ultimately, I must consider the relevance of those historical premises when the songs are presented in a new language, out of their original context. Laera defends that ‘a translation must above all “create a context” for the foreign text in the target-language performance. [...] The creation of a new context is necessarily achieved in collaboration with the director of the new theatre version’ (2011: 215). In *The Copla Musical* there is a double adaptation at play: first there is a translation of the lyrics of the songs, addressing the easy readability that adheres to the usage Venuti talks about, but secondly, there is the insertion of English *copla* lyrics into a dramatic narrative. This wider ‘adaptation’, while it has its own dramatic agenda, also provides some context for the original meanings and significance of these lyrics. As this project advanced through its research stages, I sought permission from Manuel López-Quiroga, son of the prolific composer of the

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perspective of the target audience (2000: 256).

<sup>86</sup> Johnston acknowledges the division among practitioners and translators regarding personal creativity in theatre translation, and debates ‘whether translators should play feudal servant to their master, or if they are a second author in their own right’ (1996: 6). He also denies the existence of a common methodology or even a similar viewpoint on the perceived status of translation in the theatre (ibid).

same name, and inheritor of the copyright<sup>87</sup> of his father's songs.<sup>88</sup> Sixteen of these songs have been part of the different versions of *The Copla Musical*. Permission was granted and I proceeded to undertake the translations in collaboration with a team of British lyricists. The translation of these songs has been a collaborative effort in which I have provided a first version in verse (more of a direct translation from the Spanish original), that my British collaborators have then modified to achieve a greater connection with English rhyme, prose and general idiosyncrasy. This team activity helps in approaching a transparent discourse and the illusion of authorial presence that Venuti writes about. As there is no single authorial voice dominating the translation of the lyrics, these translations remain faithful to the original *copla* songs as well as help develop the narrative of *The Copla Musical*.

Venuti aims to present a theoretical basis from which translations can be read as texts 'in their own right', with an aim to demystify transparency (2012: 17).<sup>89</sup> Following his theory, it would be fair to say that *The Copla Musical* is a text of its own, that departs from well-known but also historically and geographically localised sources, and reinterprets them in a new context, where a new set of signifiers applies to accommodate and strengthen the value of the original sources. As such, the piece was created out of a negotiation between my love towards the Spanish original songs and the pragmatic idea that translations must function dramatically in the context of a UK theatre audience. Translation in this case must fulfil the objective of connecting with the audience, and the sense of authorial presence is not a priority. *Copla* songs in *The Copla Musical* try to evoke the historical function they originally intended, as that might be the key to facilitate the connection with the audience. But Venuti identifies some violent effects of translation that could apply to this project.<sup>90</sup> One of the biggest risks of translating *copla* songs in this context is to distort their original idiosyncrasy to fit a constructed image of Francoist Spain. International audiences run the risk of framing

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<sup>87</sup> In relation to authorship, British and American law define translation as an 'adaptation' or 'derivative work' based on an 'original work of authorship', whose copyright, including the exclusive right 'to prepare derivative works' or 'adaptations', is vested in the 'author'. The translator is thus subordinated to the author, who decisively controls the publication of the translation during the term of copyright for the 'original' text, currently the author's lifetime plus fifty years (Venuti 2012: 8). In Spain, this expands up to 70 from the death of the author in accordance to EU Law.

<sup>88</sup> Editorial Company Seemsa, overseen by Manuel López-Quiroga y Clavero, owns the rights to most *copla* songs included in *The Copla Musical*.

<sup>89</sup> Venuti's theory sees transparency as one discursive effect among others: translation is a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes the source-language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation (2012: 17).

<sup>90</sup> Some of these effects are 'the construction of national identities for foreign cultures, the maintenance or revision of literary canons in the target-language culture and of dominant conceptual paradigms, research methodologies, and clinical practices in target-language disciplines and professions [...] constructing or critiquing ideology-stamped identities for foreign cultures, affirming or transgressing discursive values and institutional limits in the target-language culture' (2012: 19).

and classifying *copla* within the parameters of their own historical knowledge, therefore creating an image of *copla*'s cultural identity that adheres to a fascist ideology. This risk is also very much present in the national interpretations of the form, and to think of crossing national boundaries to export a controversially politicized genre only maximizes the challenge. Other concerns responding to Venuti's violent effects of translation relate to the characteristics of the form: the metrics of the songs, type of rhyme, semantic considerations, and how those are reinterpreted in the new language. Spanish is a syllable-based language, as opposed to English, which is stress-based. The regularity of Spanish rhyme, like most Romance languages, is very different from the irregularity of English rhyme, and this affects the structuring of the language of songs.<sup>91</sup>

Most studies devoted to translation and music have so far been centred on opera, a genre in which the text is primarily transmitted through singing. This is often the case as well for musicals, although musicals are 'more realistic than opera in terms of singer-role matching and are closer to productions of plays' (Mateo 2008: 320). While opera generally uses subtitles in its performances, musicals performed in foreign countries where English is not generally spoken (including Spain) are translated: this divergence is mostly due to social, historical, ideological and economic factors rather than technical or artistic ones (ibid).<sup>92</sup> As Mateo recalls, there is danger in adapting foreign musical theatre text according to what is assumed performable, based on cultural expectations. These expectations might not always match the stylistic boundaries of the form and might call for an expansion of the audience's cultural boundaries. Gideon Toury emphasizes that the nature of translating is conditioned by 'factors that govern the choice of text-types, or even of individual texts, to be imported through translation into a particular culture/language at a particular point in time' (Toury 1995: 98). Mateo defends that while the source text of the musical is sometimes a factor in choosing its production, the most commercially successful shows rely largely on their popular music, as there is a 'universal' nature to these works, whether the music is known worldwide or the scripts deal with cross-cultural and timeless issues (Mateo 2008: 334).

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<sup>91</sup> As dramatist Colin Teevan puts it: 'You cannot actually translate an Alexandrine into English and achieve the same effect. One always has to devise a strategy, a correlative form, you can choose a non-verse form or an iambic pentameter form' (in Laera 2011: 222).

<sup>92</sup> The translation of musicals is affected by the semiotic complexity of the text, the ephemeral and transitory nature of its reception, the multiplicity of agents taking part in a single production, and the confusion to describe the target texts, variously labelled as 'translations, versions, adaptations, and/or rewritings' (Mateo 2008: 321).

The absence of a cultural connection is one of the main problems in exporting a foreign musical to Spain, as in the case of *Jersey Boys* (2005), where there are not strong enough cultural references to make the product widely appealing, or most primarily, understood. In musical theatre, there are internal consistencies that need to be observed, such as the interaction of music and text, and the intertextual references that are created through those interactions. Musical motifs often recall other musical experiences attached to a specific culture: these referents are not shared across cultures because of linguistic, cultural and historical differences, so in this translation process, cultural proximity (or being too source culture-specific) can hinder musical translation. In Spain, Anglo-American musicals are frequently adapted to a Spanish context. For instance, the translation and adaptation of original libretti like *Victor Victoria* (1995) and *The Producers* (2001) have experienced strong text changes in order to gain acceptability in the target society (Mateo 2008: 57).<sup>93</sup> In these and other cases, although the texts often remain source-specific, a strategy to tone down the reverence towards the foreign source is implemented. This results in a process of ‘acculturation’ which removes the cultural anchoring and eliminates or minimises the relationship to any specific culture (Aaltonen 2000: 55).<sup>94</sup> Venuti argues that ‘the translator always exercises a choice concerning the degree and direction of the violence at work in any translating’ (2012: 19). As co-translator of the *copla* songs, and author of *The Copla Musical*, I am responsible for the compromises made in the interpretation and choices in the translation of the songs. Those will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

### 2.1.1. Foreignizing / domesticating debate

Translation theorist André Lefevere argues that the distribution and regulation of cultural capital by means of translation depends on the needs of the audience, the patron or initiator of the translation and the relative prestige of the source and target cultures and their languages (1998: 44). In making *The Copla Musical*, I am somehow rebelling against the current impositions of musical theatre in Spain, which is heavily influenced by Anglo-American imports and uniform globalizing tendencies. In exploring the potential of Spanish *copla*, a cultural form of the Spanish past that did not cross

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<sup>93</sup> Moreover, American poet Charles Bernstein reflects on why contemporary writing is enforced by its economic value. He affirms that ‘we are not free to choose the language of the workplace or the family we are born into, though we are free, within limits, to rebel against it’ (Bernstein 1986, in Venuti, 2012:5).

<sup>94</sup> Aaltonen also argues that this cultural relocation is a useful method when a translator wishes to guarantee the intelligibility of a foreign play as a piece of theatre (2000: 256).

Spanish-language boundaries, I am somehow reversing this uniform tendency. In this project, I look at this song genre that creatively managed to slip past censorship at a time of dictatorial control, and popularised at both ends of a divided country and society. By doing so, I irremediably challenge the natural market flow of many Anglophone musical theatre imports to Spain, but few Spanish exports abroad.

As Laera notes, theatre translators metaphorically pull in two opposite directions: 'on the one hand, the source (con)text, and on the other, the target (con)text' (2011: 214). The opposing worlds of source and target feature at the centre of Lawrence Venuti's definition of domesticating versus foreignizing translation strategies. Venuti establishes an opposition between these two, and favours foreignizing translation, which 'signifies the difference of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language' (2012: 20).<sup>95</sup> This translation method is dominant in countries like France or Germany. Anglo-American culture, on the contrary, is dominated by domesticating theories that 'recommend fluent translating, reducing if not simply excluding the very difference that translation is called on to convey' (2012: 21).<sup>96</sup> The domesticating method is very much aimed to facilitate the understanding of receiving audiences, and so Venuti warns of a risk in the appropriation of foreign cultures for domestic, cultural, economic and political agendas (2012: 18).

The debate of foreignization and domestication is relevant to the adaptation of the original Spanish *copla* lyrics into English for *The Copla Musical*: throughout the writing of the piece I often questioned whether I should try to maintain the idiosyncrasy of the original lyrics, or prioritise accessibility in the new language. This dichotomy is often present in any translation work at the beginning of the process.<sup>97</sup> Throughout the development and various international presentations of *The Copla Musical*, different strategies have been attempted to try and find the right balance between foreignization and domestication. In the English performances of the show, songs often combine verses in English and Spanish, thus maintaining a small percentage of the original

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<sup>95</sup> For Venuti, this translation strategy can be a form of resistance against ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism, in the interest of democratic geopolitical relations: 'The theory implies that in its effort to do right abroad, the text must do wrong at home, deviating enough from native norms to stage an alien reading experience' (2012: 20).

<sup>96</sup> 'Domestication replaces source-language features that are not recognizable with target-language ones that are' (2012: 21).

<sup>97</sup> Jean Graham-Jones addresses this translator's dilemma: 'Do we translators make the play accessible to the audience or do we make the audience accessible to the play? Do we attempt to do both?' (in Laera 2011: 214). Translator and dramatist Steve Gooch also warns about 'twin crimes of translation: academicism, where obscure literary or social references are pursued to the detriment of idiomatic English; and the opposite ill where, in order to make an irritating foreigner "accessible", an off-the-peg style is reached for' (Gooch 1996: 17).

Spanish lyrics. It is assumed that untranslated verses will remain inaccessible to audiences in terms of dramatic content. However, the English translation provided before or after offers a sense of the song, telling enough of the story so that the Anglo-speaking audience can still follow the general narrative; and audiences are also offered a glimpse of what the song sounds like in its original language. I have experimented extensively with this idea: in some performances songs have been performed fully translated while in others they have mixed English and Spanish. This has been the case as well when the show has been presented in Spanish-speaking countries: the songs have been sung in their original versions, but sometimes English verses have been included to test the audience's acceptability. More detail about the effects of these strategies and audience responses will be presented in the conclusions of this thesis.

German theologian and philosopher Friedrich Schleiermacher argued that there are only two methods of translation: either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him (Lefevere 1977:74).<sup>98</sup> In *The Copla Musical*, I have often veered from one extreme to the other. While I consider it key to preserve the original meaning and context of the songs, it is also essential to try and speak 'culturally' to the reader (or spectator) and adapt language and cultural referents, as the acceptance of this project partially depends on its relationship with its audiences. To a certain extent, I want to send the spectator abroad (and this is the case with many current cultural products, including musicals with strong elements of orientalism), but to do that I need to be able to 'anglicize' those foreign universes. There is, thus, inevitably some ethnocentric reduction of the songs, as Venuti suggests. My fear is that untranslated concepts in songs remain impenetrable to non-Spanish audiences, and this most possibly results in a lack of dramatic appeal to those audiences without a very specific interest in the Spanish folkloric culture, especially folklore developed more than half a century ago during the dictatorship. By compromising some details, such as argots and manners of expression, the spectator will be more drawn into the narratives told in the songs. But then again, they will inevitably miss some original references, so it seems impossible to win on both fronts. For instance, the protagonists of some *copla* songs were often gypsies that spoke a

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<sup>98</sup> Venuti elaborates on Schleiermacher's dichotomy as choosing between an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home, or an ethnodeliant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad, which are his definitions for domesticating and foreignizing within the debate he establishes (2012: 20).

language named *caló*. *Caló* words are likely to remain completely inaccessible to foreign audiences, even though those are commonly accepted in the Spanish versions of the songs (although their meanings are not always known). As Ivo Buzek points out, *copla* is generally written in an Andalusian flavoured Spanish and splashed with a few words from *caló* language to give the folklore a slightly exotic taste.<sup>99</sup>

Accents and modes of speech are also something to take into consideration in translation. For instance, domesticating advocate Eugene Nida defends that transparency and accuracy in translation depend on generating an equivalent effect in the target-language culture (Venuti 2012: 22). This implies that communication is then controlled by the target-language culture, and for Venuti therefore it seems less an exchange of information than an appropriation of a foreign text for domestic purposes (ibid).<sup>100</sup> When thinking of applying these methods to *The Copla Musical*, I could argue that if Andalusian words/accents were for instance translated into Northern English words and expressions, that would compromise characters' backgrounds and distance the songs from their cultural heritage. In a way, this would be a distinct attempt towards domestication that I choose not to engage with, and that is one of the reasons this project sits in the middle of the debate. However, according to French translator and theorist Antoine Berman, even when applying a foreignizing choice, 'an otherness can never be manifested in its own terms, only in those of the target language, and hence always already encoded' (Berman 1985: 87-91, in Venuti 2012: 20). So that also implies that Andalusian features or heritage might provide unreadable to the target audience. For defender of domestication Berman, the priority is the effect of the text in the target culture. In theatre, this might happen even more prominently, as words are heard as opposed to only read, but I will discuss this in more detail in the intercultural section of this chapter (2.2).

As we can see through the few examples given, there is a difficult challenge in presenting *copla* out of its historical context. Klaudyna Rozhin speaks about 'the difficulty presented by the cultural context of foreign plays, and claims that although there are ways of domesticating foreign concepts, these are likely to undermine the otherness of the text' (in Aaltonen 2000: 256). Venuti talks about an illusionism produced by fluent translating, by which the translator's invisibility at once enacts and

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<sup>99</sup> (cf. Ropero Núñez 1978) 'Las coplas generalmente [son] escritas en un español andaluzado y salpicadas con alguna que otra palabra del caló para darle al folklore un sabor ligeramente exótico'. (*Copla* songs are generally written in an Andalusian Spanish and sprinkled with a few *caló* words to season the folkloric form with a light exotic taste) (Buzek 2013: 39).

<sup>100</sup> An example of this equivalent can be seen in Laera's translation of Bola Agbaje's *Gone Too Far!* (2007) from English to Italian. The Italian translation 'plays on the language differences between the rich and dominant North (Milan in particular) and the disadvantaged, dominated South of Italy' (2011: 215).

masks an insidious domestication of foreign texts, rewriting them in the transparent discourse that prevails in English and that selects precisely those foreign texts amenable to fluent translating (2012: 16). In using either strategy, *copla* songs are difficult to be considered as transparent or amenable to fluent translating. This is maybe why this translation has not been fully attempted before,<sup>101</sup> or that it has been attempted in Spain mainly for comic purposes (for example, on TV shows). The thought of providing an accurate translation of a genre like *copla*, that is so historically charged, often results in parodic gestures aimed at Spanish audiences that reinforce the idea of *copla* being 'untranslatable', as no other culture would have the history and tools to fully understand all the layers and the idiom of these songs. *The Copla Musical* makes a non-exhaustive (as there are thousands of *coplas*), but research-led attempt at trying to recreate the value of a selection of songs in a new context, and even if presented out of their time and place, their context is also recreated in the narrative and dramaturgy of the play.

It is not immediately apparent to audiences that *copla* songs offered a subversive tool of resistance to the Franco regime. As discussed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, Sieburth talks about the enduring power of these songs.<sup>102</sup> A translation that could reproduce the infatuation that Spanish audiences felt towards those songs should most definitely include some contextualisation to the realities people experienced at the time, whether of a repressive nature, or a cultural attraction and identification with social political and sexual symbols of freedom. In this context, for dramatist Steve Gooch translating plays can only be an 'act of love' that relates to discovering in the original play some new and slightly exotic quality that the home audience should know about: 'like a love affair with a fascinating foreigner whom you feel compelled to introduce to your family' (Gooch 1996: 13). My challenge when translating *copla* songs is to assume the position of the foreigner, and to present my cultural background to the new culture I am embracing. So effectively, and in reverse to Gooch's process, I want international audiences to love *copla*, but my question remains 'how can I share my Spanish experience of *copla* and make the British (and other non-Spanish) audiences feel or understand what I feel?': this question prompted the development of *The Copla Cabaret* in 2015, an iteration within my PaR that revolved around the translation and presentation of *copla* to foreign audiences in relation to

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<sup>101</sup> Prior experiments presenting some *copla* songs in Anglo-speaking contexts are limited to Spanish stars like Lola Flores or Marifé de Triana who performed internationally in the USA in the 1970s and 1980s, but the songs would be performed in Spanish.

<sup>102</sup> In *Survival Songs: Conchita Piquer's coplas and Franco's regime of terror* (2014) Sieburth theorises on how *copla* songs helped people to work through feelings of terror and grief in ways that were politically safe and emotionally manageable.

other cultural manifestations. Gooch interestingly points out:

If you love a person, after all, you hate to see your view of them misrepresented or misunderstood - even if you yourself are blind to their worst qualities.

'Faithful' certainly can mean 'objective' in this context because the translator's subjectivity necessarily stands behind his or her efforts. This is not simply a matter of how you view the foreign work, but also of the geographic, cultural and social limits through which your unconscious use of your home language has been formed (Gooch 1996: 18).

Any translation is subjective to a personal view, and as Gooch suggests, I want audiences to see what I regard as the best of *copla*. Within my subjectivity, I have chosen for the project some of my favourite songs and fit them within a narrative through which I have also tried to enhance the qualities of these songs. In addition, I have channelled them through a performative style in which my personal interpretation of the songs is even more latent. All of it a labour of love, entirely personal and subjective, but as Venuti observes, legitimate and unique 'in its own right' (2012: 17). In the following sections, I will discuss some of the choices made in the project that have affected the translation and presentation of English *copla* within this PaR.

### **2.1.2. Translating *copla*: the case of rhyme and rhythm**

British translator JM Cohen remarked that '20<sup>th</sup> century translators [...] have generally concentrated on prose-meaning and interpretation, and neglected the imitation of form and manner' (Cohen 1962: 35, in Venuti 2012: 6). With *copla* songs, form and manner are of an essential nature, as these songs are framed by their musical structure and lyrics cannot easily expand or contract, and occupy further or lesser musical space in the new language. The parameters are given by the metrics of the song, and the relationship of music and lyrics works differently in English and Spanish. The practice of making *The Copla Musical* depends on finding a balance between the exchanging cultures, so that elements from both remain visible and sensitive to the receptivity of a cosmopolitan and multicultural English-speaking audience. In the process of translating these songs, I worked together with a team of British lyricists who helped me negotiate cultural representation and authority to establish that balance. However, music integrated into a strong visual field is not easily disassociated from its original intentions, since it contains meta-dramatic elements that signify dramatic intent. Musical elements from *copla* songs (such as modes, pitches, chords, ornaments and motifs) help contextualize situation and characters, and create additional layers of

subtext that may guide an audience's perception of the various dramatic elements in a musical.

In the study of musical theatre performance, past and existing theoretical studies by practitioners and academics such as Woolford, Knapp, McMillin, Kirle, Stempel, Taylor, and Riddle<sup>103</sup> to name a few, have focused on the literary principles of a song's lyrics – rhyme, consonance, metre, etc., as a key to shaping the methods by which actors and directors develop 'popular' performances.<sup>104</sup> In recent years, attention has shifted to the musical principles of a song – melody, harmony, rhythm, etc. (Bell 2012: 251). But what happens when two different languages come together? How does language translation affect musical principles, and which language will carry the cultural authority? The nature of rhyme differs significantly in English and Spanish. Spanish rhyme is often concerned with expressing passions and feelings by repeating patterns of open vowels at the end of the verses. In English, consonant rhyme is often associated with wittiness, which is not as common in Spanish. Also, it not always placed at the end of verses. For example, in his Tin Pan Alley musicals, Cole Porter imaginatively placed rhyming words in places other than at the ends of symmetrical verses. He also employed multiple rhymes within a single line, and sometimes rhymed the first words of a pair of two-word groups. For instance, in the second verse of the song 'I Get a Kick Out of You':

I'm sure that if I took even one sniff

It would bore me terrifically, too. (Cole Porter)

'Porter raises notes in the melodies to draw attention to the rhymes: if-sniff- terRIFic'ly' (Riddle 2003: 57).

The example above illustrates consonant rhyming placed throughout the verse, relying on the sound 'if' to establish the rhyme. Consonant rhyming in Spanish requires that all vowels and consonants are repeated in the last syllable or syllables, mostly at the end of alternate lines. Consonant rhyme in English differs from Spanish in that only the consonant sounds must be repeated, whereas the vowel sounds can change (e.g. bell and ball, dump and damp, meter and miter, mile and mole, etc.). Given the complexity of rhyming full syllables, the most common type of rhyme that we find in Spanish is assonance, however it seems that the most popular rhyme in English is consonance because of the variety of consonant sounds, which allows for multiple

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<sup>103</sup> For full references, please refer to the bibliography: Woolford (2013), McMillin (2006), Kirle (2005), Knapp (2004), Stempel (2010), Taylor (2012) and Riddle (2003).

<sup>104</sup> Popular here is understood as appealing to the general public; widely favored or admired.

rhyiming combinations. Rhyming preferences are also influenced by the nature of each language: Spanish rhyme mostly focuses on vowel and open sounds whereas English puts a strong emphasis on consonant sounds. Finding consonant rhymes for all English translations complicates or even constrains the meanings of the original *copla* songs. For that reason, every song in *The Copla Musical* is the result of a cultural negotiation that results in combining the rhyming conventions of assonance and consonance, sometimes prioritizing one over the other to preserve meaning or style, whilst attending to the original songs as much as to the new songs' potential acceptability by the receiving audience.

As discussed in Chapter 1, *copla* songs are self-contained dramatic stories, therefore one of the main challenges of this project is to select and locate the song's pre-existing narratives in the sequence of dramatic events, yet maintain the style and features of these songs. Therefore, the work of adaptation requires more than a mere translation, given that the dramatic purpose that defines this project includes modifying lyrics in order to fit the narratives proposed by the libretto. In the collaborative process of translating *copla* songs, I first took the lead in translating the original lyrics from Spanish to English, trying to be as faithful to the Spanish originals as possible in preserving both meaning and style. Afterwards, in dialogue with the British lyricist we negotiated the linguistic translations conscious of whose interests the translated work ultimately served; that is, I questioned the original meaning of songs, which in many instances still remained unclear, and together with my British collaborator, we aimed for a dramatic adaptation that would support the dramatic narrative of the libretto and illuminate significant dramatic conflicts. Effective lyric writing greatly depends on specificity – that is, that songs and their lyrics are particular to a dramatic situation and therefore not only propel the plot but also illuminate a significant dramatic conflict. Conventionally good lyric writing also demands effective mastery of poetry and rhyming, grammar, prosody, metrics, structure and sensibility. Most of these characteristics are defined by the cultural context in which the work is to be presented. Thus, at the end of this adaptation process, I moved away from my literal translation to welcome an intercultural version that would resonate with an English-speaking audience.

As a result, we established a variety of rhyming combinations. For instance, sometimes we maintained assonance across the translation from Spanish to English, as the example below in the song *Las tardes del Ritz* ('The Ritz Afternoons'):<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Please note how in these verses, we changed the way to express the disapproving of the mother towards the daughter dancing in the Ritz salon. However, the meaning remains unchanged in the

### Spanish original

*Siga bailando, aunque mire mamá,  
que si se irrita, ya se calmará.*

### English translation

Just keep on dancing as she sits and stews,  
It's not our problem, nothing we can do.

At other times, Spanish assonance transformed into English consonance, as in the song *Tatuaje* ('Tattoo'):

*Y voy sangrando lentamente  
de mostrador en mostrador,  
ante una copa de aguardiente  
donde se ahoga mi dolor.*

I feel my heart is growing sicker,  
I've been to half the ports of Spain.  
And I'll take any glass of liquor  
To help me suffocate my pain.

Sometimes we slightly altered the original meaning and added consonance that would resonate better in English, as in *Y sin embargo te quiero* ('But I Love You Anyway'):

*Y bajo tus besos  
En la madrugada  
Sin que tú notaras  
La cruz de mi angustia  
Solía cantar.*

Covered with your kisses,  
Feeling how they sting,  
Though inside I'm dying,  
No one hears my crying  
Every time I sing.

These examples illustrate some of the cultural negotiation that happened between languages in this adaptation process. But I can also talk about adaptation between different musical languages. The two distinct musical traditions also presented challenges when adapting some musical elements of the songs, for example, rhythm. The opening number of *The Copla Musical, Carceleras del Puerto* ('Jailer of the Port'), is a *copla* song with a Spanish rhythm known as *bulería*, which is specific to flamenco. A *bulería* phrase has a total of 12 beats out of which some are accentuated, with the phrase beginning on the 11<sup>th</sup> beat.

*Opening line in the song 'Jailer of the Port', subject to a bulería rhythm:*

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performance through the action. Semantically, the focus reverts to the couple dancing but the mother remains very much present in the equation.

Me - jor qui - sie - ra es - tar muer - to, —

10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Musically, the *mf* is emphasising the beginning of a new phrase. The emphasis of the lyric falls on beat 12 (me-JOR) and the phrase keeps counting onwards, as follows:

Me-JOR qui-sie-RA\_ES-tar MUER – TO.....

11 12 1 2 3 4-5 6 7 8 9 10

In the example above, I have written the accentuated syllables in higher case to illustrate this rhythm. The original Spanish lyrics emphasize the accentuated beats of *bulería*, but that is not necessarily the case with the English translation so in the adaptation and performance processes there is a decision to be made of whether to prioritise the flamenco rhythm or the English prosody. This decision would affect the understanding of the lyrics as well as the performance of the song, the musical accompaniment and the orchestration.

SPANISH LYRICS	ENGLISH LYRICS: <u>BULERIA</u> <u>ACCENTS</u>	ENGLISH LYRICS: <b><u>PROSODIC</u></b> <b><u>ACCENTS</u></b>
<i>Mejor quisiera estar muerto,</i>	I'D <u>RATHER</u> DIE <u>THAN</u> GO ON <u>LIVING</u>	I'D <u>RATHER</u> <b><u>DIE</u></b> THAN <b><u>GO</u></b> ON <u>LIVING</u>
<i>Mejor quisiera estar muerto,</i>	I'D <u>RATHER</u> DROWN <u>THAN</u> GO ON <u>BREATHING</u>	I'D <u>RATHER</u> <b><u>DROWN</u></b> THAN <b><u>GO</u></b> ON <u>BREATHING</u>

This example illustrates some of the problems in relation to the simultaneous adaptation of lyrics and rhythms. While the Spanish original lyrics match the accents of *bulería*, that is not the case with the English translation. In the second column of the comparative table above, we can find underlined and in italics the emphasized beats in the English lyrics that would match the *bulería* accents in this song. In the third column, however, we see underlined and in bold the emphasized beats that match the English prosody. The prosody or natural inclination of speech follows different patterns in

English and in Spanish, where stresses lie in different parts of the sentences. If we choose to transfer the *bulería* original accentuation pattern to the English version, that would complicate the readability in English since it would not follow the natural prosody of the receiving language and as a result it would sound ‘odd’. By changing some lyrics, it can be assumed that the music needs to be altered too, keeping awareness of maintaining both cultures’ visibility.

Understanding *copla* and the adaptation of these songs requires both musical and cultural knowledge. This project was conceived and developed in London, a multicultural city with a strong tradition of musical theatre, and in this process of making *The Copla Musical*, I have collaborated with several British artists through the various iterations of the practice, such as musical directors David Merriman (2013) and Kimon Pallikaropoulos (2014-18), actor Ian Sanderson (2012-13), directors Tom Riley (2013) and Tian Glasgow (2016), and lyricists Gus Gowland (2012) and Tim Gilvin (2013). The project has also benefited from the collaboration of artists from a variety of nationalities, as well as a big collective of Spanish artists. In this process of adapting lyrics and rhythm for *The Copla Musical*, the musical director’s analysis of the songs’ musical properties expanded upon the potential richness of *copla*, sensitive to the notion that songs express what words alone cannot. Musical director David Merriman encouraged emphasizing the first quaver in each bar in the song ‘Jailer of the Port’ in favour of the English prosody of the lyrics. This affected the natural rhythm of *bulería* that required linking the last and first syllables of subsequent quavers to accentuate some words that, like in the Spanish original, are not critical to the content of the song. This compromise between both cultures is made also in favour of the narrative, as storytelling is central to musical theatre:

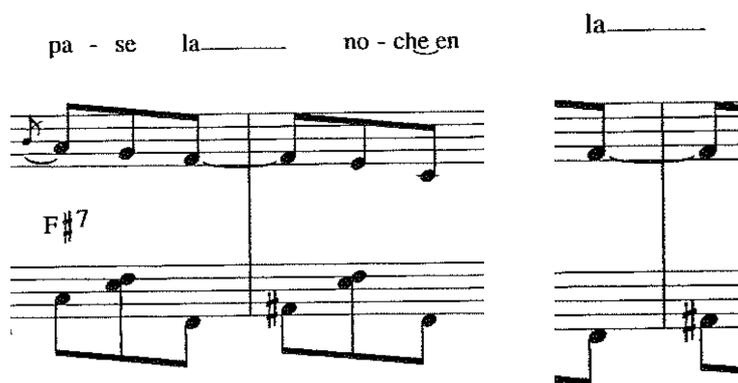


Fig. 2: Example of tie in *bulería* rhythm “Jailer of the Port”

## SPANISH LYRICS

*Que pase la-a noche  
en vela,*

ENGLISH LYRICS: BULERIA  
ACCENTS

All of the-e world colliding

ENGLISH LYRICS: PROSODIC  
ACCENTS

All of the world colliding

The musical director's job involves shaping the dynamics and musical phrasing of both singer and orchestra to help support the actor, character and dramatic situation. Their analysing of the musical properties adds new layers to the interpretative process, and their cultural background helps the negotiation between suitable representation of the source material and good readability in the receiving language. In *The Copla Musical* the musical director, in collaboration with other members of the team with both Spanish and English backgrounds, looked after the accessibility of the material, facilitating a transition from the culturally unknown to the 'known'. This involved musical and literary analysis undertaken by the multicultural creative team.

In our process, new culturally accessible songs were born out of the collaboration of a multicultural team. Merriman came from a strictly musical theatre background and applied his knowledge to ensure the readability of *The Copla Musical* as a musical theatre piece in Britain. This was reflected, for instance, in the structure of some of the songs. For example, the original structure of *Carceleras del puerto* ('Jailer of the Port') is: two verses, a bridge and a chorus (AABC), a common structure in *copla*. The atypical characteristic of this song is that we only hear this structure once through, despite the commonality of repetition of the refrain in many *copla* songs. However, Merriman decided to add another chorus at the end, slightly changing the song's structure to AABCC. Additionally, during the performance, the song would be dramatically interrupted before reaching the end for the following reasons:

- Merriman considered that many *copla* songs originally did not have what in musical theatre is defined as a 'button' (i.e. a definitive ending prompting applause), and decided to structure the songs in such a way as to discourage applause at the end of them, allowing the narrative to carry on from the song.
- He suggested that a new character should interrupt the song thus propelling dramatic action and finding an economical way of using music as a device to define character.

*Copla* songs have many different structures influenced by other folkloric song-forms such as *pasodobles*, *zambras*, *chotis*, etc. in a similar way to the Tin Pan Alley songs that were also influenced by American folk forms such as ragtime or jazz after 1924. However, there are some structural patterns that can be found in both *copla* and

Tin Pan Alley songs. As happens in most Western popular music, there is repetition of different musical elements (motivic, rhythmic, melodic). In Tin Pan Alley songs, the most common structure, a thirty-two-bar chorus, frequently divides into an AABA scheme such as in songs like 'Blue Skies' or 'I Got a Kick Out of You'. Alternatively, there is usually an instrumental introduction that anticipates themes from the songs, or offers an original evocative melody to set an atmosphere. The guitar introduction of the opening number 'Jailer of the Port' (see example below) runs the chorus and establishes the tonic in a major mode (which is the same mode of the chorus), even though the rest of the song is minor. These introductions might be used as underscoring as well as to evoke and remind of dramatic moments during the piece.



Musical elements help contextualize situations and characters and create additional layers of subtext which add to the tools that actors can use to interpret musically driven, dramatic moments. But what happens to linguistic concepts that resist translation or adaptation? In each case, I had to modify either music or lyrics to convey a clear meaning. For example, in *copla* song *Dime que me quieres*, translated as 'Tell Me That You Love Me', the original Spanish lyrics read: '*si tú me pidieras que abriese mis venas, un río de sangre me salpicaría*' (literally: 'if you asked me to open my veins, a river of blood would splash on me'). My British collaborator considered this translation too extreme for British sensibilities in the context of a love song, whereas the original Spanish lyric has historically been accepted as a manifestation of passion. Therefore, the verse was finally rewritten as: 'If you ever ask me to cut my veins open, I'd bleed out a river of the reddest carnation.' This adaptation focused more on the colour of blood than the visceral Spanish original 'blood splash'.

Another example can be found in song *Y sin embargo te quiero* translated as 'But I Love You Anyway' in which the original Spanish lyrics '*eres mi vida y mi muerte*' literally translate in English as 'you are my life and my death'. This translation technically matches meter and scansion within the original melody of the song. However, my British collaborator considered it most appropriate to change 'life and death' to 'voice and silence'. This change had a positive echo in some audience

members who commented on the beauty of that line without knowing that it was changed from the original *copla* lyric.

SPANISH ORIGINAL	LITERAL TRANSLATION	DRAMATIC ADAPTATION
<i>Eres mi vida y mi muerte</i>	You are my life and my death	You are my voice and my silence
<i>Te lo juro compañero</i>	That I swear to you, my friend,	And I swear to you my darling
<i>No debía de quererte</i>	for I know I shouldn't love you,	Though I know I shouldn't love you
<i>No debía de quererte</i>	for I know I shouldn't love you,	Though I know I shouldn't love you
<i>Y sin embargo te quiero</i>	but I love you anyway.	I still love you anyway.

In the process of bringing *copla* closer to international (Anglophone) audiences, elements from English and Spanish cultures remained readable to a British audience. The intercultural nature of this project becomes present from planning to execution.

## 2.2. NEGOTIATING AN INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATION

### 2.2.1. Definition and perspectives

Interculturalism in theatre has been in evidence for many centuries but only recently has it been theorised and written about in detail. Definitions of the term have largely come from the English-speaking world. Performance theorist Richard Schechner used the term 'interculturalism' to label the cultural exchanges present in the work of Peter Brook and his International Centre of Theatre Research. Schechner started to use the term 'interculturalism' in contrast to 'internationalism', advocating for exchanges among cultures that don't obey national boundaries (Schechner, in Pavis 1996: 42). Since then, many definitions of 'interculturalism' have been formulated. Carl Weber defines it as 'a collaboration and appropriation which brings forth art works that combine elements from separate cultures and their indigenous artistic traditions' (1991: 27); Julie Holledge and Joanne Tompkins describe it as 'the meeting in the moment of performance of two or more cultural traditions' (2000: 7); and for Joseph Roach interculturalism questions 'the feasibility of theatre as a mediator across boundaries of historical and cultural difference' (1992: 13). In accordance with all of these definitions, I would argue that *The Copla Musical* is a PaR theatre project that combines elements from the artistic traditions of Spanish, British and American musical theatre cultures; it facilitates the meeting of these cultural traditions in the moment of a performance in

front of a multicultural audience; and it becomes a mediator across boundaries of historical and cultural difference, since *copla* is a Spanish song genre from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century which is not really operational in mainstream theatre, whereas musical theatre is a present reality in British and American popular theatre cultures.

The purpose and role of interculturalism in contemporary theatre practice has been explored by a series of academics and practitioners. Erika Fischer-Lichte believes that intercultural performance is constituted by 'the relationship between the continuation of the own traditions and the productive reception of elements of foreign theatre traditions' (1990: 5).<sup>106</sup> For Patrice Pavis, the term interculturalism in contemporary theatre practice 'confronts and examines traditions, styles of performance and cultures which would never have encountered one another without this sudden need to fill a vacuum' (1992: 2).<sup>107</sup> Julie Holledge and Joanne Tompkins (2000) second Pavis's understanding of the term in contending that intercultural theatre is too varied and process-based to warrant a general theory. Jaqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert consider that there is not yet an integrated body of theory for intercultural theatrical practice, and most of the existing critical work tends to concentrate on particular instances of cultural exchange. Lo and Gilbert make a classification of multicultural theatre in which they distinguish small 'm' multiculturalism and big 'M' Multiculturalism. 'm' theatre does not draw attention to cultural difference and uses devices such as blind casting, pluralism and folkloric displays in its productions to showcase specific cultural art forms. 'M' theatre is, on the other hand, counter-discursive, and it aims to promote cultural diversity (2002: 33-35).<sup>108</sup> *The Copla Musical* does not necessarily fit into this classification, although it could be argued that it contains elements of both: the concepts of nostalgia, migration, cultural in-between-ness, and the presence of the Spanish community have been a constant in the work.

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<sup>106</sup> According to this definition, Fischer-Lichte questions whether interculturalism helps to confirm, metamorphose or dissolve cultural identity, and whether it attempts to propagate an awareness of foreign culture or it rather is a cultural exploitation (1990: 18).

<sup>107</sup> Pavis also questions the transformation of intercultural theatre into a theatre of urban cultures in the suburbs of the big cities (2010: 14). But he nevertheless claims that it is too soon to propose a global theory of interculturalism.

<sup>108</sup> Under the 'M' umbrella Lo and Gilbert group: ghetto theatre (concerned with origin and loss, nostalgia, mostly monocultural in-house productions), migrant theatre (concerned with migration, hybridity and ethno-specific languages to denote cultural in-between-ness) and community theatre (made by, with and for a community) (2002: 34-35).

### 2.2.2. Views and positions of interculturalism

The early discourses of anthropological interculturalism, articulated by theorists Richard Schechner and Victor Turner, considered intercultural theatre an instrument for white westerners to 'commodify' other cultural traditions. This commodification was governed by aesthetic or utopian rather than political concerns – even if the cultural material that was negotiated raised important issues about cultural imperialism, appropriation and colonisation that were not acknowledged. Debates around the politics of interculturalism continue into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>109</sup> Scholar Ric Knowles identifies two tendencies in intercultural theatre: the materialist (grounded in material realities, the social and the historical) and the universalist (grounded in platonic ideals, the psychological and universal).<sup>110</sup> In addition to this classification, Quebecois academic Josette Féral recognizes two types of reaction to interculturalism: the 'euphoric' and the 'dysphoric'. The euphoric is the position of artists such as Eugenio Barba, Robert Lepage, Peter Sellars, or Peter Brook, that describe the bases of an emerging global culture: a theatre that is based on the merging of traditions where audiences are confronted with the specific as well as the universal truth, by virtue of performances that blend various cultures (Féral 1996). These artists claim that interculturalism is beneficial in broadening attitudes to raise awareness of our neighbours' otherness. The 'dysphoric' is the reaction of critics who see interculturalism as representing the danger of a ruling culture unduly appropriating other cultures and traditions without offering anything in return.<sup>111</sup>

The position of the euphoric and the universalists is represented with passion by theatre director Peter Brook. Brook views interculturalism as an opportunity for several cultures to merge, and describes his theatre work as free from social and cultural predeterminants, inequities and power relationships. He borrows traditions from foreign cultures and incorporates elements from them into Western texts. His approach has been severely critiqued by various scholars. Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert have questioned his process of 'stripping readable signs of culture from the source text rather than provoking the audience to examine tensions between participating cultures' (2002: 47). Rustom Bharucha, fearing that audiences would

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<sup>109</sup> For example, Paul Rae's review of Lo and Gilbert's book, or Bharucha's 2014 book.

<sup>110</sup> Brecht was a major influence in materialist theory, which was developed by Bharucha, Balme, Lo and Gilbert, and Holledge and Tompkins. On the other hand, the universalists follow Artaud's writing and are represented by practitioners such as Grotowski, Barba, or Brook; and they privilege the concept of sameness: 'patterns shared across differences that can themselves be understood as accidental or merely cultural' (Knowles 2010: 16).

<sup>111</sup> Scholars such as Carl Weber, Una Chauduri, Rustom Bharucha, Daryl Chin and Richard Schechner defend this position (in Marranta 1991).

presume a better understanding of Indian culture following a viewing of Brook's *Mahabharata*, which he considered a misrepresentation of the original poetic text, defined Brook's work as the 'appropriation and reordering of non-western material within an orientalist framework of thought and action designed for the international market' (Bharucha, in Knowles 2010: 68).

Bharucha represents the position of the materialists and the 'dysphoric'. He defines interculturalism as a 'voluntarist intervention circumscribed by the agencies of the state and the market' (2000: 33), however he does not suggest other ways of cultural exchange. Supporting his position, Una Chaudhuri believes that interculturalism has become an effect of global mass-communication, another version of cultural imperialism that favours the West in performance. For Daryl Chin, interculturalism centres on questions of autonomy and empowerment and can easily lead to cultural imperialism. And theatre director Benny Ambush believes that interculturalism is counterproductive for it only 'whitewashes aesthetically different people, inviting spectators to think that racial and/or cultural specificities do not matter' (Ambush, in Lo and Gilbert 2002: 33). On the other hand, Pavis believes that, in a political sense, the work of intercultural performance might function more effectively to redress rather than perpetuate the colonial project and might help a more equitable basis for exchange. Interculturalism has thus been extensively critiqued as problematic, especially since studies of artistic interculturalism have been carried out within political contexts as human traffic between nations and cultures, hybridity, transnationalism and syncretism (that is, the merging of forms) have increased in an age of cheap travel and redefined geographical boundaries.

Lo and Gilbert make a classification of the working methods employed in intercultural theatre, from more collaborative to more imperialistic. They understand collaborative interculturalism as community-generated and without a focus on maintaining the purity of the various cultures for exotic display, but rather on exploring 'the fullness of cultural exchange in all its contradictions and convergences for all parties' (2002: 39). On the other hand, imperialistic interculturalism is often driven by a sense of Western culture in need of invigoration from the non-West, where non-Western cultural traditions are perceived as authentic and uncontaminated by (Western) modernity. This is largely an aesthetic response to cultural diversity that tends to be product-oriented and usually produced for the dominant culture's consumption. Intercultural practice in this sense is deeply involved in globalization and the deterritorialization of the social, cultural, and political boundaries in the developed world.

A further classification of interculturalism according to distinct lines of theatre practice is made by critic Bonnie Marranca, who distinguishes between those artists inclined toward formal experimentation and abstraction (such as a performance mode close to Japanese aesthetics), and those artists who declare themselves for a politically-engaged, popular theatre (as in some Latin American, Indian, Southeast Asian and African affiliations). Nevertheless, she insists that artists of both persuasions take for granted that their work reflects social commitment. In an attempt to put names to these distinct lines, Lo and Gilbert have considered postcolonial theory to be most consistently political, taking as its primary imperative the task of exposing and redressing unequal power relationships between cultures, whereas interculturalism has concerned itself more often with the aesthetics of cultural transfer (Lo and Gilbert 2002: 36).

*The Copla Musical* does not follow a specific line of practice or perspective; neither does it take sides in this intercultural debate, although the practice would probably be better received from a universalist-euphoric position, as its intention is for British and Spanish cultures to merge and exchange content and form at an equitable basis. Although *The Copla Musical* is grounded in material realities of social and historical difference and faces audiences with social and cultural predeterminants, the project does not have an interventionist agenda. The idea is to facilitate a blend of Anglophone and Spanish musical theatre features, which prompts, according to the 'euphoric', the basis of an emerging global culture. Even though the incipient extinction of *copla* might be affected by an incipient process of globalization as suggested by the 'McDonaldization' of musical theatre (Rebellato 2009), *The Copla Musical* is not an attempt to protest against that. Rather, it is an experiment that, contrary to most anti-imperialistic views, uses a major Western culture (Anglophone musical theatre) to help reimagine a less known Western cultural artform that I argue is in need of invigoration (*copla*). Unlike Bharucha, I do not fear the 'wrong' presumption of Spanish culture following a viewing of *The Copla Musical*; I am precisely using interculturalism to enhance the visibility of the eclipsed Spanish *copla* in the context of other cultures. *The Copla Musical* does not present the original Spanish songs, but dramatic adaptations in the frame of a musical theatre piece that interrogates Anglo-American standards of the form. In this sense, I cannot anticipate the risk of a ruling culture unduly appropriating other cultures and traditions without offering anything in return: *copla* offers musical theatre narrative-driven theatrical songs, and musical theatre offers *copla* a new platform that favours its re-enactment and readability outside Spanish boundaries. I would hence classify this project as an example of collaborative interculturalism, since

its focus is not on maintaining the purity of the various cultures for exotic display, but rather on exploring and testing the limits and possibilities of this cultural exchange. Collaboration was ensured throughout the creative process by the intercultural composition of the team.<sup>112</sup>

### **2.2.3. Intercultural terminology**

While the term Interculturalism suggests an exploration of the interstice between cultures, there is a long debate regarding other terminology that refers to similar or related theatre practices. Terms like multicultural (many or multiple cultures existing side-by-side), cross-cultural (two or more cultures meeting under certain conditions for exchange), transcultural (culture that can transverse or transfer into another culture), extracultural (exchanges that are conducted along a West- East and North-South axis) or intracultural (to denote encounters between and across specific communities and regions within the nation-state) are widely deployed by practitioners and academics and often intersect in their use.

Lo and Gilbert make a comparative study of multicultural, intercultural and postcolonial theatre. They describe multicultural theatre as a practice that emphasizes similarities between traditions, effacing differences and reinforcing dominant Western values.<sup>113</sup> They define intercultural theatre simply as a hybrid derived from an intentional encounter between cultures and performing traditions. They consider 'multicultural and intercultural' to be sub-categories of 'cross-cultural', which they define as

site-specific theatre practice characterized by the conjunction of specific cultural resources at the level of narrative content, performance aesthetics, production processes, and/or reception by an interpretive community (2002: 31).

Lo and Gilbert divide the field of intercultural practice into three categories: the transcultural, the intracultural and the extracultural.<sup>114</sup> The intracultural model,

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<sup>112</sup> The collaborative process will be discussed later in the chapter (sections 2.2.5 and 2.2.6).

<sup>113</sup> Lo and Gilbert argue that multicultural theatre functions premised on ideals of citizenship and the management of cultural/ethnic difference, while intercultural theatre and, to a certain extent post-colonial theatre, have more latitude to explore and critique alternative forms of citizenship and identity across and beyond national boundaries (2002: 36).

<sup>114</sup> Lo and Gilbert position intercultural exchanges within the audience only within the extracultural category, which applies to theatre exchanges conducted internationally. These exchanges can be classified as collaborative (community generated, emphasizing the politics of exchange) or imperialistic (produced for the dominant culture's consumption), and normally happen in English, lingua franca in an increasingly globalized arts community, which gives its native speakers considerable power to substantiate their views (2002).

sustained by Rustom Bharucha, points to internal diversity within the boundaries of a particular region or nation, whereas extracultural theatre questions international power relationships, celebrates differences, and goes back to the pioneers who looked to the non-West to rejuvenate Western art. Bharucha considers multiculturalism to be 'a trap that erases cultural specificity' (2000: 11). Transcultural theatre 'aims to transcend culture-specific codification in order to reach a more "universal" human condition' (Lo and Gilbert 2002: 37). Carl Weber makes a distinction between 'transculturation' and 'acculturation'. The first transcends and transforms both the foreign and indigenous tradition, while the second acquires and acclimates a foreign culture or aspects of it, that is, the inscription of a preserved foreign code in a native structure, which implies that an ideology is inscribed with it. Weber defines transculturation as 'the deconstruction of a text/code and its wrenching displacement to a historically and socially different situation', and considers that emerging new modes of performance frequently evolve from a transculturation of foreign structures and ideas (Weber 1991: 35).

Intercultural practice is continuously changing: relationships and perspectives are renegotiated and it is difficult to map a pattern of cultural exchange in theatre as a movement or genre. Patrice Pavis thinks that the expression 'intercultural theatre' still sounds odd to Western ears and prefers to speak of 'intercultural exchanges within theatre practice' (1992: 3). Fischer-Lichte argues that 'projects once considered cross-cultural could upon reconsideration be identified as intercultural, and later through comparisons with other projects as transcultural' (1990: 11). In my opinion, these terms describe very similar processes. They are frequently confusing and rarely used by practitioners. I would argue that only some classifications, for instance, between intracultural and extracultural, or multicultural versus intercultural mark a defining distinction.

If there is a need to categorize *The Copla Musical*, I would label it as extracultural since it suggests exchanges beyond national boundaries, and essentially intercultural, as exchanging cultures do not only co-exist in the project but rather mould and affect each other. However, *The Copla Musical* could also be easily categorized as transcultural since the exchange could arguably involve a partial disculturation, and cross-cultural since the merging of *copla* and Anglophone musical theatre has the potential to transform both artistic traditions. Lo and Gilbert argue that 'narrative content, performance aesthetics, production processes, and reception' are the product of a site-specific cultural context (2002: 31). They believe that cross-cultural theatre involves a process of encounter and negotiation depending on the artistic capital

brought to a project as well as the location and working processes implicated in its development and execution. The development of *The Copla Musical* takes place in London in the frame of an academic institution, with the artistic capital from a team of British and Spanish industry professionals working voluntarily in an exploration of cultural exchange. Artists are participating for different reasons: some Spanish artists are interested in seeing *copla* move beyond Spanish physical and cultural boundaries, some British artists are interested in the qualities that *copla* brings to musical theatre. According to Pavis, transcultural practitioners are interested in particularities and traditions only insofar as they enable them to identify aspects of commonality rather than difference (1996: 6), and that is the ultimate goal of *The Copla Musical*: to blend two cultures by emphasizing similarity and compatibility rather than focusing primarily on cultural difference.

#### **2.2.4. Models of reference: Ortiz, Lo and Gilbert, and Pavis' hourglass**

*The Copla Musical* involves the integration of several Spanish *copla* songs into a newly created plot, in an attempt to mirror the form of dominant paradigms of Anglophone musical theatre (book musical, jukebox) as a means of locating the site where intercultural processes occur. This practice is predicated on a number of theoretical principles expressed in Ferdinand Ortiz's transcultural model (1940, described in Taylor 1991), Patrice Pavis' hourglass model (1990) and its subsequent critique by Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert (2002).

Ortiz's transcultural model advocates for keeping visible identities (in our case, Spanish and English) while looking for an equal exchange between cultures. Transculturation theory delineates the process by which 'one culture changes through the imposition or adoption of another' (Taylor 1991: 61). Cuban ethnomusicologist Fernando Ortiz argues that the process of transculturation does not only imply the acquisition of culture (acculturation), but it also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of one's preceding culture (partial disculturation). *The Copla Musical* aims to position the visibility of a source culture (*copla*) within the context of a dominant Anglophone musical theatre culture, and aims to keep an equal balance between both identities. However, this exchange is located and developed in London, where musical theatre is overtly popular<sup>115</sup> and *copla* is not particularly known as an art form. This

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<sup>115</sup> There are currently over forty big scale musicals playing on and off-West End. There is also a substantial amount of new musicals being written. In the last BEAM festival organised by Music Theatre Network and Mercury Musicals Development for the creation of new musical theatre in the UK, over 300

affects the relationship between source and target cultures in the development and presentation of this practice. However, the multicultural population of a city like London in 2018 generates a diversity of backgrounds in an audience that comes from multiple cultural settings; and London's migrant idiosyncrasy grants a voice to an otherwise international presence.

Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert's model represents intercultural exchange as a two-way flow with both partners considered as 'sources', while a target culture (the audience) is positioned along a continuum between them into which both feed (2002). The strength of this model is that it 'locates all intercultural activity within an identifiable socio-political context' (Lo and Gilbert 2002: 45) but it does not totally identify the audience, the 'target culture' (ibid). Exchanges between participating cultures should ideally occur at the same level in order to attempt a more equal basis for exchange. This 'level' criterion refers to the understanding of *copla* songs embodying cultural values that relate to local or indigenous knowledge of Spain's culture and traditions. In *The Copla Musical* I explore ways for *copla* songs to become musical theatre in the manner that an Anglophone audience normally encounters the form, thus making the songs accessible and readable outside their Spanish context. But these songs are also preserved in style, content and form, making intercultural flow possible by levelling both ends of the continuum.

Patrice Pavis' intercultural model uses the metaphor of an hourglass through which he explains the layers of intercultural immersion of a foreign source culture melting into a receiving target culture while also being determined by it (Pavis 1992: 5). With the hourglass, Pavis makes one of the earliest attempts to imagine 'a theoretical model that would describe the way in which the mise en scène presents and transmits a foreign culture to the public' (Pavis 1990: 57). However, his hourglass model has only one-way flow, filtering rather than proposing fluid interchange. Pavis presumes a monocultural west in which intercultural communication is possible by 'changing the mode of readability from one culture to the other' (Pavis 1992: 205). Ric Knowles critiques Pavis' focus on the responsibility of the 'Western artist' to control circumstances of the intercultural exchange as opposed to allow a more open exchange without such a strong focus on readability (Knowles 2010: 25). Lo and Gilbert further critique Pavis' model based on his privileging of aesthetics over politics, and on a lack of criticism towards power relationships. But mainly they criticize his central image of distillation, in which elements of the source culture are made

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pitches were presented, which demonstrates that musical theatre is very much alive in the country (MTN 2018).

manageable to the target culture by a reduction to essences that can be easily absorbed (Lo and Gilbert 2002).

*The Copla Musical* explores the undertones of Spanish folklore and what *copla* music is, with aims to transport audiences who may have never encountered this form of Spanish folklore or be familiar with the Spanish Civil War, to 1939 Spain. Differently to most previous British and American musicals, *The Copla Musical* does not use English actors to play Spanish characters, but Spanish actors to play native Spanish-speaking characters and English actors to play native English-speaking characters. The combination of cultural backgrounds in the cast facilitates an intercultural approach within the creative team in the production of the piece. *The Copla Musical* aims to unite my practice as the Spanish author with the interests of an international Anglo-speaking audience. Musical theatre has historically approached other cultures from a perspective of orientalism<sup>116</sup> through which Western (Anglophone) culture has borrowed from other traditions to legitimate and perpetuate its own value system(s). Additionally, Anglo-American musicals have been translated and exported worldwide in a now common globalizing process. In this project, Spanish *copla* is for the first time translated for Anglo-speaking audiences and not exclusively vice versa, what suggests a turnaround in power relations is possible and necessary for more authentic cultural exchange. *The Copla Musical* compiles a series of traditional Spanish songs adapted and performed in English and interwoven into a linear plot. The project supports an intercultural exchange made possible by an intercultural team of theatre artists for a cosmopolitan audience located in London.

### **2.2.5. An introduction to our intercultural process**

At the core of *The Copla Musical* lies the idea of integrating several Spanish *copla* songs into an English language narrative attending to several paradigms of Anglophone musical theatre. Like most creative processes in musical theatre, the storytelling impulse starts with the writer, and his creation is handed to a group of actors and directors to facilitate dramatic exploration and the transformation of words into actions. This has also been the case with *The Copla Musical*. With aims to create an equitable basis of exchange, the Spanish author has gathered an international team of Spanish, British and American actors and directors that have collaborated in the creation of the work. Additionally, the input of other British artists such as a translator,

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<sup>116</sup> See Raymond Knapp's notes on orientalism in *The American Musical and the Formation of National Identity* (2004).

dramaturg, lyricist and arranger has been essential in helping to create a bridge between the two cultures to facilitate this cultural exchange. Shannon Scrofano questions the possibility to develop a cross-cultural dialogue without sacrificing the unique identities of individual speakers (2012: 290), as actually in a creative engagement of these characteristics, artists must be willing to let go of their own referents and understand how to position themselves within the project. Participants must be open to adapt their cultural knowledge and mode of expression for a common cause: a bridge of readability that represents an intercultural commitment. But what does it take for this cultural bridge to become the final goal, the performance?

Venuti explains that a translator consults many different target-language cultural materials (dictionaries, texts, values, paradigms, ideologies) throughout his activity, and that this consultation reduces and supplements the text, even when source-language cultural materials are also consulted (2012: 24). This process is replicated to a variable extent in the creation of *The Copla Musical*. In leading the writing and production processes of this PaR through its several phases, I have identified as author and assumed a representative position of the Spanish culture, especially when collaborating with British artists. Nonetheless, since 2007 I live and am fully immersed in Anglophone culture, where I encounter values, paradigms and ideologies at both personal and creative levels. The consultation of these cultural values is an unavoidable effect of my life in England, but it must also remain an active initiative, an effort to approach and understand a whole signifying system in which I have not grown or developed my cultural references. In seeking the positive acceptance of *The Copla Musical*, and generally in the interests of this research project, I have put my best efforts into this activity of immersion into the receiving target culture. However, this is not necessarily the case of my British collaborators: none of them speak Spanish, neither were they familiar with Spanish culture before the project, or had any previous knowledge of *copla*. Their experience of Spanish culture is filtered through my own, as well as through my artistic vision as the project's lead artist. In principle, this does not sound like an equitable basis of exchange, as both cultural agents do not participate in the project with equal conditions.

The act of collaboration was a chief motive in this project where we reached for relevance of new and hybrid forms, with an understanding of the needs of the work to speak to today's world. My artistic vision guided a process focused on incorporating other artists and, through a collective act of will and effort, expressing that vision on stage for others to experience. In *The Copla Musical* I used the source, Spanish *copla*, to explore the historical development of Spanish musical theatre and its potential

externalization beyond Spanish culture. My personal practice aims to rejuvenate *copla* in an international context while critically reflecting on the intercultural processes that are implicit in my research of historical revisionism in international musical theatre making. Practice enables my position as a researcher and as an artist; it allows me to explore changing modes of readability from one culture to another. There is a quest to move from what are independent forms of musical theatre towards the recognizable musical theatre in the context as we know it. The 'known' is then placed on a stage to be witnessed. But the 'not known' (*copla*) is also placed at the same intersection, in relation to the 'known'. The challenges of adapting the 'not known' into the 'known' affect several areas that include dramaturgy, music, lyrics, performance, production and reception of the new intercultural work. In what follows I will look at some examples in some of these areas and analyse the specific elements at stake in the performance of English *copla*.

### **2.2.6 The performance of English *copla***

In his introductory article to *Stages of Translation*, Steve Gooch acknowledges that 'actors can't act what they can't perceive, and if a translation doesn't communicate directly, directors rarely have enough time to provide a compensating explication (always assuming they've seen the difficulty themselves)' (1996: 13). Gooch's faith in the actor and director seems limited, and presumably he wants these to not face the difficulty or additional challenge of cultural translation. In *The Copla Musical*, however, both actors and directors are at the core of the creative process, which in turn is fully dependant on their intercultural bond. Spanish and British performers bring into this project distinct interpretative qualities given their various trainings and cultural influences. A performer's adaptation to a foreign culture involves a gradual and organic transformation, which reflects their growing cultural awareness. In a musical theatre project, an actor-singer's performance normally becomes fuller, more animated, especially in the use of gesture, facial expressions and diction when understanding musical and semantic subtexts. Equally, in *The Copla Musical* actors from English-speaking backgrounds were briefed on the characteristics and style of *copla*, so that they could intellectually engage with the songs' features and background. However, I would argue that actors can only achieve deeper and more empowered performances of the songs when their understanding is embodied and not exclusively intellectual. This has often been the result of exploring a full rendering of the *copla* songs' dramatic potential in relation to the structure of the overall story written in their language. Songs in musical theatre often help the storytelling through the expression of feeling. Equally,

*copla* songs have been translated into English with a strong dramatic purpose that helps preserving the emotions that in my view exist in their original lyrics.

So what happens after translation, for example, to those Spanish performers facing the responsibility of singing a song and telling a familiar story in a new and unfamiliar context? Violeta García has been a performer in *The Copla Musical* for many years. She used to sing Spanish *copla* professionally with a music ensemble, but in this project, she has gone through a process of self-discovery in relation to the genre, reshaping her cultural understanding through the reinterpretation of these songs in a different context.<sup>117</sup> The transmission of interpretation begins with the assimilation of technical knowledge that the performer learns and personalises. Spanish and British performers need to find their own way of handling these materials. Spanish actors need to perform the new English *copla* while preserving the implied emotions they could identify in the original songs. British performers will find it helpful to know the original style and context of *copla* songs, however mimesis is not a useful tool in this intercultural process. If actors apply their own cultural skills to singing English *copla*, they will probably develop more nuanced, textured and compelling performances.<sup>118</sup> By approaching the text from his own cultural knowledge, the British performer also slowly builds his or her awareness towards the material's original culture, and brings it closer to the audience's comprehension, closing this circle of intercultural adaptation.

Eugenio Barba defines inculturation as 'the process of passive sensory-motor absorption of the daily behaviour of a given culture' (Barba 1991: 219). A performer's adaptation to a foreign culture involves a gradual and organic transformation, which is also a reflection of their growing cultural awareness. Ian Sanderson is a British actor who has been involved in *The Copla Musical* since 2011. By 2013, he had developed a stronger sense and understanding of *copla* through performing the songs in English, which has led him to a more visceral performance of these songs. Native English-speaking performers are modified through their contact with Spanish culture, and are transported somewhere new, unusual and specific. As Richard Schechner puts it:

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<sup>117</sup> 'Singing *Copla* in English is weird, especially when being used to singing it in Spanish. In exploring how to find the best way of singing English *Copla*, I realized that the more I shaped the phrasing and articulation attending to the rules of English language, the closer it got to finding a new truth in this so particularly Spanish genre' (Violeta García. Interviews with the cast of *The Copla Musical*, London: Roundhouse, 2013).

<sup>118</sup> A performance approach that is commonly encouraged in musical theatre is 'to imbue songs with psychological realism, organically, delivering the lyrics as if they were a realistic passage of conventional prose' (for instance, approaching the song as a monologue) (Bell 2012: 252). 'The theory behind this approach suggests that by treating the text as a monologue set to music, the actor will gain new insights into how and why the character might need to sing the thoughts' (ibid).

Performing someone else's culture takes a knowledge, a "translation" that is different, more viscerally experiential, than translating a book. Intercultural exchange takes a teacher: someone who knows the body of performance of the culture being translated. The translator of the culture is not a mere agent, as a translator of words might be, but an actual culture-bearer (1991: 314).

*The Copla Musical* is full of culture-bearers. Starting with the author and performers from Spain who are familiar with the tradition of *copla*, and ending with the lyricists, musical director and other collaborators who come from an Anglophone musical theatre background. In between the Spanish, British and international artists involved in this project, there is also a wide audience who have multicultural backgrounds. We all complement each other in this intercultural exchange, as the cast and creative team work together to find out the dynamics of the new English *copla*, and how it will be performed. My re-imagination of *copla* follows an intercultural process as a method to re-engage with old cultural codes that are put into perspective and updated in an intercultural musical aimed at a contemporary, multicultural and predominantly urban audience. This process has probed the notion of cultural sensitivity through the complex dialogue already inherent in collaborative and performance styles. Through addressing cultural sensitivity, I sought to render transparent the challenges and solutions that pertain to one of the intercultural principles I pursued: that of maintaining cultural visibility on both sides of the cultural dialogue through a process of identifying cultural frames of reference. This discourse is defined in terms of a target British audience, but it does not erase or flatten the Spanish source material and by extension, its culture; on the contrary, by speaking the language of Anglophone musical theatre, Spanish *copla* manages to keep a visible identity abroad. This intercultural experiment highlights new dynamics of collaboration and creativity and, in a modernised context, also illuminates a way forward for intercultural musical theatre as a distinct form within the dominant Anglophone, West End-Broadway genus.

### **2.3. QUEER CONSIDERATIONS**

Queer studies emerged in the 1970s thanks to the impulse of the feminist movement that opened the door to gay and lesbian studies, and while queer studies derive partly from gender studies, they also inherit some new philosophical ideas. Gender studies attend to the representation of the genders masculine and feminine, whereas queer

studies aim to break that binary. Philosopher Michael Foucault argues that the term 'homosexual' has a limited history that started in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and establishes that sexuality must be understood not from a theological-traditional point of view but through the dynamics established with its representations and sociocultural contexts. This implies that the dichotomy man-woman must be replaced by a constructed sexual identity that is not binary but that reflects a series of possibilities beyond masculine and feminine. Scholars like Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick<sup>119</sup> have helped build queer theory from this principle, defending a diversity of sexualities against traditional restrictive dichotomies. Queer theory relates to gender studies by questioning apparently stable identities with the objective of reformulating processes of formation and differencing around sexuality (Mérída 2006: 69).

Queer theory is rooted in linguistic theory, especially that of JL Austin who, in a series of twelve lectures at Harvard University in 1955 argued that 'utterances, which are a part of the doing of an action, normally not described as saying something, should be known as performative sentences' (Austin 1962: 11-12). The 'speech act' in the total speech situation 'is the only actual phenomenon which, in the last resort, an audience is engaged in elucidating', that is, to give meaning to a spoken action (1962: 12). If a couple were to exchange vows with no-one present, the speech act would no longer be considered as such: the vows would become sentences holding no performative meaning, no longer creating what they describe. Scholars have applied the ideas of speech acts and performative utterances to the performance of gender, thus generating what came to be queer theory. According to Judith Butler, gender is not fixed but a social construction, and we reinforce this construction daily through repetition and enactment.<sup>120</sup> As gender is a construct of society, it relies on how it is 'performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence' (Butler 2002: 33). Identity is then performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results, and behaviours become regulatory norms: the way we dress, sit, the space we occupy, etc.: 'There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender' (ibid: 33).

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<sup>119</sup> According to Sedgwick, queer can refer to 'the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically' (Sedgwick 1993: 8-9).

<sup>120</sup> Butler rejects the essentialist beliefs that there is a natural link between sex (male, female) and gender (masculine, feminine). She believes that gender is culturally constructed: 'hence, gender is neither the casual result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex' (Butler 2002: 9). Heteronormativity (in Butler's terms, the heterosexual matrix) reinforces the patriarchal social order based upon the binary opposition of male/female.

Gender identity theory is another root of queer theory. 'Queer' is an umbrella term that is inclusive, challenging and oppositional.<sup>121</sup> Queer theory resists gender norms and is fluid: it allows for play with sexual identities – which can be multiple rather than singular. Queer emerged as an umbrella term to incorporate the array of alternative sexual identities to homosexuality and heterosexuality. The term 'queer' is reclaimed to be anti-binaries, anti-assimilationist, anti-heteronormativity (where gay marriage, for instance is seen as normative for some), and in a way anti-gender.<sup>122</sup> It attempts to bring people who share a common identity together, but it can also be ambiguous. Queer studies transgress the dualist codes and patterns that define heteronormative behaviours. In its 1990s formulation, queer studies try to redesign a referential map to interpret the past with new critical lenses that destabilised the traditional canons. Its theorists try to give sexuality a new vocabulary and to create a vital and intellectual dimension that is subversive, rebellious, proud and vindictory.<sup>123</sup> There is, thus, a strong political element attached to queer theory, as it applies its action ratio to issues of race, religion, ecology and to groups marginalised by a capitalist globalizing economy (Mériida 2006: 70).

### **2.3.1. Queer theory applied to musical theatre**

Butler compares gender roles to theatrical performances. She states that 'gender is always a doing' just like speech acts, therefore it can be performed (2002: 10). Performing gender makes it real and accepted. In a theatre performance, audience identifications in relation to gender and sexuality (plus other types of identification like race or class) happen with fictional characters in real time and space. This spectatorial practice of multiple identifications makes theatre 'a particularly utopian medium' (Savran 2003: 74). Queer theory acknowledges and enhances any non-straight traditional or conventional interpretations of popular content. 'Queer' as Alexander Doty

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<sup>121</sup> The term 'queerness' literally means 'oddity, anomaly', but it has also known a time in which it was used as a sexual insult; LGTB collectives have appropriated it in an empowering way to name this anti-heteronormative sexual theory.

<sup>122</sup> 'Queer theory...has sought to understand identity and sexuality as a regime of knowledge and power rather than as pre-given facts, calling into question 'obvious categories (man, woman, Latin, Jew, butch, femme), oppositions (man vs. woman, heterosexual vs. homosexual), or equations (gender = sex) upon which conventional notions of sexuality and identity rely' (Hennessey, 1993, p. 964, in Greer 2012: 7).

<sup>123</sup> 'Queer represented an attempt to open up a vista of multiple, shifting, and gloriously polymorphous bodies, pleasures, and sites of resistances and to problematize 1970s-style identity politics and the minoritizing discourses associated with lesbian-feminism and gay liberation. In this way, it became part of a new and seductively universalizing discourse that could include under its rainbow banners anyone willing to renounce the claims and prerogatives of heteronormativity' (Savran 2003: 58).

writes, marks 'a flexible space for the expression of all aspects of non- (anti-, contra-) straight cultural production and reception' (Doty 1995: 3).<sup>124</sup>

There is a distinguished body of work examining the links between queer theory and musical theatre. Doty writes about the Hollywood musical and the pleasures provided through 'effeminized aesthetic, camp, and emotive genre characteristics (spectacular décor and costuming, intricate choreography, and singing about romantic yearning and fulfilment)' (Doty 1995: 79). According to Wolf, musicals generate queer meanings and offer queer pleasures for audiences (2002: 4). Musicals provide dramatic content that is appropriated and adapted by audiences to fulfil their own needs. The performance code in musicals generally involves an exaggeration of reality. This 'exaggeration' might easily be determined as camp, although it is not always the case. Susan Sontag defines 'camp' as a 'love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration' (Sontag 1964: 1) that often represents a homosexual sensitivity.<sup>125</sup> This camp association to musicals has drawn gay closeted audiences to the genre pre-Stonewall,<sup>126</sup> and become a focus of gay affiliation thereafter. The use of exaggeration in performance has 'provided a liberating model' (Knapp 2010: 206), a platform in which the boundaries of gender can be challenged.<sup>127</sup>

This may explain why a significant proportion of Western gay men identify as musical theatre devotees and have also been centrally involved in cultivating this cultural capital: 'musicals have historically been created by gay talent and have been the repository of a broad spectrum of gay cultural strategies, including camp, hyperbole, overstated decor and fashion, crossdressing, quotation, mimicry, gender inversions, put-downs, and bad puns' (Negrón Muntaner 2004: 74). On one end we find gay composers, writers, lyricists like Cole Porter, Lorenz Hart, Moss Hart, Arthur Laurents, Jerome Robbins, Stephen Sondheim, and a long etcetera of relevant names in the production history of musicals, and on the other end, there are multitudes of keen gay audiences, connoisseurs of the data and trivia and avid attendees to the theatre shows and other community-building practices.<sup>128</sup> After War World II,

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<sup>124</sup> Alexander Doty and Corey Creekmur argue that queerness is 'at the core of mainstream culture even though that culture tirelessly insists that its images, ideologies and readings [are] always only about heterosexuality' (Doty 1999: 31).

<sup>125</sup> For a wider understanding of camp, I refer the reader to Susan Sontag's essay *Notes on Camp* (1964).

<sup>126</sup> The events in 1969 at New York City's Stonewall club became a key impulse for gay visibility movements. The riots organised in the Greenwich Village neighbourhood attacked the anti-gay legal system of the time and fought to promote rights for gays and lesbians.

<sup>127</sup> According to Knapp, exaggeration in performance allows 'a voyeuristic glimpse into alternatives that might be both relished and satisfyingly put aside as morally flawed' (2010: 206).

<sup>128</sup> 'Through most of the history of the American musical, the "natural" has, of course, been taken to be heterosexual, despite the proportionally substantial numbers of homosexuals who have always been part of the audience for musicals and most often part of the creative team and among the performers as well.

homosexuals were both pathologized and criminalized as the image of the 'wholesome' white, middle-class nuclear family in the suburbs came to represent American values. The musical then appeared to reflect the dominant values of the culture: conservative, sexist, and homophobic (Wolf 2002: 9). Golden Age musicals presented heterosexuality as normative, at least in terms of societal notions of respectability, but homosexual practices were implicitly negotiated in terms of familiar patterns of accommodation (Knapp 2010: 264). In the midst of the 1950s Cold War, the fear of homosexuals was closely linked to the fear of communists, but theatre identification often escaped the eye of censors.<sup>129</sup> The fascination of gay men for musical theatre has been consistently explored in autobiography and essayistic literature. For instance, D.A. Miller presents his personal recollection as well as the gay fascination towards musical theatre in his essay on the Broadway musical, 'Place for Us' (1998). He analyses the intersections between the musicals and the experiences of gay men, and affirms that virtually all 1950s musicals have a gay subtext: 'musicals have long offered personal, emotional and cultural validation for gay men' (Miller, in Wolf 2002: 21).<sup>130</sup> For John M. Clum, the main attraction in musicals for gay men is the identification with the diva and her over-the-top rendition of femininity (Clum, in Wolf 2002: 22).

Identification is central to the reception of musical theatre. According to Raymond Knapp, musicals provide material for performance that audiences might want to appropriate and adapt to their own needs, such as gender roles and sexualities (Knapp 2010: 205).<sup>131</sup> Gay audiences might see themselves as the characters, and therefore objectify them, either as a referent or as an aspiration, or even an object of desire. Other possibilities of identification include admiration, sympathy, objections towards the character, etc.; some audiences might even not identify with characters, but still feel emotionally involved in the plot and musical numbers by admiring the music or the dance. According to David Savran, the theatre spectator always has the

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[...] The resoluteness with which American musicals have reified heterosexual norms, except very occasionally and mainly in the last few decades, is as astonishing as it is understandable; it is no aberration that heterosexual musicals were composed by homosexual men' (Knapp 2010: 264-5).

<sup>129</sup> 'While overt homosexuality was banned on film because of the Hays Code, coded gay characters appeared on television, on film and in the theatre, as in the plays of Tennessee Williams. For example, an unprecedented number of films contained a gay male subtext in the 1950s, including *Ben-Hur* (1959), Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train* (1952), Nicholas Ray's *Rebel without a Cause* (1955), and *Johnny Guitar* (1954) (which contained lesbian subtext as well). Furthermore, the enormously popular comedy team of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis came across to many spectators as a gay couple' (Wolf 2002: 242).

<sup>130</sup> 'Miller argues that part of the musical's magnetism is due to its seductive ability to make gay men want to be -that is, perform as - women. Describing it as "the utopia of female preeminence on the musical stage", Miller argues that it is "a form whose unpublicizable work is to indulge men in the thrills of femininity *become their own*"' (Miller, in Wolf 2002: 22).

<sup>131</sup> 'Gender roles and sexuality are, above all, *performed* attributes of personal identity and so constitute a central dimension of how people are defined' (Knapp 2010: 205).

opportunity to take multiple positions and desire multiple partners; to enjoy what Butler calls 'the *pleasure* produced by the instability of erotic categories' (Savran 2003: 75). This instability is redoubled by the fact that the spectator is never completely able to separate a character from the actor playing the role. So one always identifies with and desires both a clearly designated absence (a character) and a presence (an actor) (Butler 1993: 308).

Wolf argues that 'the actor is more than the character, and we see and hear the character through the actor' (2002: 34), therefore identification with the person onstage transcends the character. The experience of identification can be enhanced even further if the spectator identifies with an actor categorised as a star,<sup>132</sup> a public figure whose aura transcends the performance.<sup>133</sup> The 1950s, often defined as the Golden Age of musical theatre, is a period in which stars were the selling point of a show and could guarantee its profitability. Examples here include Ethel Merman, Mary Martin or Carol Channing. The representation of women in the 1940s and '50s was mainly concerned with presenting housewives or women in the domestic space, who are feminine, gentle, passive and pretty; they cook and do the housework. These women are often taught lessons by men; they are also habitually dominated by them. These conservative representations respond to the heteronormative matrix that dominated the musicals of the time. However, in musical theatre, these representations differ in kind from others in mass culture, especially when lead roles are performed by female stars that, to a certain degree, invite audience identification.<sup>134</sup>

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Wolf re-looks at the musical through a queer approach. Based on Peggy Phelan's idea of 'performance's only life is in the present, and the document of a performance is only a spur to memory, an encouragement of memory to become present' (Wolf 2002: 7), Wolf argues that the reconstruction of

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<sup>132</sup> Richard Dyer argues that stars are 'embodiments of social categories in which people are placed and through which they try to make sense of their lives, and indeed through which we make our lives—categories of class, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation' (Dyer 1986: 18).

<sup>133</sup> Wolf defines a star as 'a very famous person, a celebrity, and often a performer, whose everyday life has become as important as, if not more important than, her acting. Gossip about her is as fascinating as her performance. [...] The star persona is a public figure who is defined, often complexly and often with contradictions, in relation to the cultural politics and social practices of her time. The star must fit enough to be popular yet be distinguished enough to be exceptional' (Wolf 2002: 34).

<sup>134</sup> 'While many musicals do feature the ingenue/girl-next-door in the soprano romantic lead (Laurey in *Oklahoma!*), and a few musicals offer temptresses (Lola in *Damn Yankees*), just as many contain strong, dominating women like Anna in *The King and I*, Auntie Mame in *Mame*, and Dolly Levi in *Hello Dolly!* Even women coupled with men emerge as powerful and singular. Most of the shows focus on women, and they tend to be the stars' (Wolf 2002: 16).

those performances requires a re-contextualisation.<sup>135</sup> Many Broadway musicals of the Golden Age are contradictory in that they present conservative values and at the same time offer representations of women as strong, empowered, and able to escape containment in the heteronormative set-up they inhabit.<sup>136</sup> ‘Wolf attempts to reclaim the musical for both lesbian and more generally feminist spectators by pointing out that female characters in mid-century musicals are offered up less as objects of desire than as strong, dominating women’ (Savran 2003: 60). Wolf uses the case study of *The Sound of Music* and suggests reading the character of Maria as a lesbian.<sup>137</sup> Wolf sees the appeal of the character in her ‘tomboy autonomy’ and relative lack of interest in heterosexual romance, and concludes that ‘*The Sound of Music* invokes lesbian desire, compels lesbian identifications, induces lesbian readings, and works as a contemporary cultural signifier of lesbian identity’ (McFadden 2006: 101).

For Wolf, queer readings of musicals are as valid as the ‘straight’ readings that are conventionally presented. Both simply rely on different, if naturalized, assumptions about representational practices and, by extension, social relations (2002: 24). Queer readings have been also widely applied to *West Side Story* (1957), a musical loosely based on William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. In the adaptation from the original play to the musical, the two opposing families (Capulets and Montagues), have been transformed into urban tribes that are fundamentally masculine and presumably heterosexual. However, the characters relate and struggle in a place full of homosocial undertones, with hyper-masculine attitudes that encourage the imaginary of the queer spectator.<sup>138</sup> The women in the musical are mainly presented in the safety of their homes or working places, whereas the street is pictured as a space for the men. The only female character that shares the outside space with the men is tomboy girl

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<sup>135</sup> Wolf’s argument defends that there is no natural way to read a text, and that straight readings are applied by default. This is based on Diana Fuss’ idea that ways of reading are historically specific and culturally viable, and reading positions are always constructed. See Fuss (1989: 35).

<sup>136</sup> This contradiction leaves space for spectators to construct alternative readings of characters and narratives, readings that Wolf seeks to theorize. That is, ‘Wolf’s project is to reconstruct queer readings that are readily available to anyone who chooses to analyse these texts from a feminist and lesbian perspective’ (McFadden 2006: 99).

<sup>137</sup> ‘Wolf invents a theoretical “lesbian” viewing position, the quotation marks signifying her recognition that such a viewing position is open to anyone who chooses to read the musicals in this way’ (McFadden 2006: 99).

<sup>138</sup> ‘Significantly, one of the queer effects of the film for certain gay spectators is the possibility to live dangerously, to enjoy the surfaces of rough “trade” without any of the perceived risks through performance. [On a separate note] the “effeminacy” of many dance sequences where Jets and Sharks pretend to fight, one on top of the other, makes space for ritualized same-sex physical contact that would be otherwise impossible in a 1961 Hollywood film. Set to snapping fingers and “boyish” pranks, “race” offers exhilarating tension to the same-sex contact while displacing the possible queer connotations of body movements’ (Negrón Muntaner 2004: 71). ‘Even if *West Side Story*’s “poor” setting conspires against certain kinds of campiness, the stylized violence, puns, and other strategies suggest a gay structure of feeling’ (Negrón Muntaner 2004: 74).

Anybodys, who seeks acceptance and integration into the gang through the display of masculine behaviour. However, the Jets constantly remind her of 'her abject (lesbian) femininity' (Negrón Muntaner 2004: 71).

*The Wizard of Oz* (1939) is another good example in the identification of gay audiences. In the gay popular imaginary, Oz has become the metaphor of a promised land where gay people would live free of prejudice. Symbols like the rainbow now represent the gay collective, and songs like 'Over the Rainbow' or 'Come Out'<sup>139</sup> have become gay anthems because new subtexts have been attributed to them. The land of Oz functions as a place of empowerment where good fights evil. These extremes are represented by good girl Dorothy, a kind and empathetic character, and the Wicked Witch, a clichéd character that is presented as simply bad and powerful. Dorothy goes through a personal journey of rejecting the adult world that has wronged her and wanting to escape to a better place of acceptance (Knapp 2010: 140).<sup>140</sup> Other gay subtexts and referents are constructed through the characterisation of Dorothy's Oz companions, the scarecrow, the tin man and the cowardly lion, which in the film musical are drag versions of the Kansas farmhands 'with elaborate costumes and makeup, and more exaggerated mannerisms' (Knapp 2010: 133).<sup>141</sup>

Knapp also looks at other examples of musicals interacting with gender issues, namely *Cabaret* and *Chicago*. Both present women at odds with justice that succeed in

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<sup>139</sup> 'Oz seemed to project a pointedly gay land, where Glinda's "Come Out" could seem to have more pointed meaning and where having the courage to admit to being a "Friend of Dorothy"—to "come out" as a homosexual—could seem more widely empowering. [...] This dimension has seemed especially obvious in the wake of the Stonewall Rebellion, which occurred in the immediate aftermath of Judy Garland's tragic death in 1969 (by then she had become a major gay diva and icon)' (Knapp 2010: 134).

<sup>140</sup> 'This aspect of the film is, as much as is its camp dimension, foundational to its appeal to gays, many of whom feel empowered, through a complicated process of identification, by the image of a Judy Garland on the brink of adulthood, playing a girl who gamely fights for her place in the world. This is also what allows this film to function as an American fairy tale: it is here not enough just to be good and deserving (as in *Snow White*); one must also act' (Knapp 2010: 140).

<sup>141</sup> 'Beyond the film, and especially for the growing homosexual audience for the film in more recent decades, their elaborate drag and exaggerated modes of behaviour give them a distinctly gay aspect; thus the Scarecrow's desire to be "conferrin' with the flow'rs"; the Tin Man's interest in "the boy who shoots the arrows" and his shyly giggling "We do" in answer to Dorothy's "We know each other now, don't we?"; or the Cowardly Lion's lament about having been "born to be a sissy," his "dandy-lion" gestures and tail-swishing walk, and his penchant for operatic singing and overly precise locution ("If I Were King of the Forest," where we also hear him, fresh from getting "a permanent just for the occasion," preoccupied with the fabric of his projected regal robes: "satin, not cotton, not chintz"). Because of the easy identification these three provide for many gay men, "Friends of Dorothy" and the film's central rainbow image have long since acquired specifically homosexual connotations. (And, of course, from this perspective Judy Garland is herself in a kind of drag, pretending to be a little girl despite that big voice and her tightly wrapped bosom.) While Dorothy's Oz companions may be framed as her imaginary wish projections, they become the cinematic equivalent of flesh and blood through the campy performances of three grown men shamelessly playing dress-up with a young girl. It is, frankly, hard to see how the film's hints at a homosexual dimension could have escaped mainstream notice for so long, or how even today they can seem invisible to so many' (Knapp 2010: 133).

their plans, therefore abandoning the 'bad-girl-always-gets-punished' scenarios. In his book *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity* (2010), Knapp also analyses the evolution of queer referents in musical theatre, from narratives in which homosexuality was presented as something involving inevitable punishment in *A Chorus Line* (1975), to the extreme 'uninhibited celebration of difference' of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* that same year. He analyses a long tradition of closeted camp dimensions in Golden Age musicals<sup>142</sup> and a very exposed camp aesthetic in postmodern works like *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (1998; film version, 2001)<sup>143</sup> (Knapp 2010: 208).

### 2.3.2. A Spanish contextualisation of queer

To this day, the use of the term 'queer' does not have a recognised translation to Spanish and its use in Spain has proved confusing. While in Britain and America, queer theory occupies a notable space in many University programs, in Spain there has been a stigma against queer studies, considered an intellectual novelty that challenges sexual taboos (Mérida 2006: 71). Popularly, the concept 'queer' is still relatively new and is commonly confused with 'gay, drag-queen, transvestite and transsexual' although none of these respond to its real definition (ibid: 70). Queer people reject sexual classifications and promote a social change against heteronormativity, both individual and collective. Spain is more concerned with heterosexist assimilations and the recognition of LGBT rights, than a transgression of sexual norms and definitions, and is generally intellectually behind its Anglo counterparts in queer developments.<sup>144</sup> However, it is fair to acknowledge that just as musicals have been a referent for queer identification in Britain and America, Spanish *copla* has also assumed gay innuendo, both in the lyrics of the songs as well as in the makers of the genre (writer and performers).

The social ultra-catholic model imposed by Franco's dictatorship from 1939 to 1975 sought to control and repress any deviance from conservative heteronormative canons. This had particularly tough consequences on women and gay men. This last

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<sup>142</sup> For instance, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953) playing, in part to a closeted gay community (Knapp 2010: 208).

<sup>143</sup> 'Hedwig presents its quest for wholeness amid the various fragmentations—of self, of society—that have followed modernity, within both figurative and explicitly sexualized terms' (Knapp 2010: 208).

<sup>144</sup> For more information about the evolution of queer theory and gender studies in Spain, the reader can check Alberto Mira's *De Sodoma a Chueca. Una historia cultural de la homosexualidad en España en el siglo XX* (2014) and Rafael M. Mérida Jiménez's publications: *Sexualidades transgresoras. Una antología de estudios "queer"* (2002), *Manifiestos gays, lesbianos y queer* (2009), as well as *Minorías sexuales en España* (2013).

group was legally persecuted by the *Ley de Vagos y Maleantes* (law of lazy and mischievous people), already active since the Second Republic (1931) and modified in 1954. The later *Ley de Peligrosidad y Rehabilitación Social* (law of danger and social rehabilitation) addressed acts of homosexuality, begging, vandalism and clandestine migration (Pérez 2009: 65). It was approved on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1970 and remained active until the end of 1978 (Mérida 2015). The lives of 4,000 to 5,000 homosexuals were affected by this 1970 law, with thousands of gay people condemned without apparent motive other than the exercise of the repressor's power. Gay prisoners were sometimes divided by their sexual practices: active homosexuals would be sent to a prison in Huelva, and passive homosexuals to another one in Badajoz, to be applied different 'cures' (Ruiz Mantilla 2013: 52). In prison, homosexuals would be 're-educated' into heterosexuality and applied extreme therapies that included electric shock treatments.<sup>145</sup> It was believed that homosexuality had a cure: other than political and legal aspects, the opinion of the doctors also promoted the repression towards the homosexuals (Arnalte 2003).

Repressive legislation coexisted from the late 1960s with a shy tolerance in the opening of new venues in which LGTB networks increased their visibility. This was strictly under vigilance and only in the big cities, especially Barcelona. It was in this context that new small nightclubs and cabarets emerged offering shows with female impersonators, transvestites and transsexuals. There are some autobiographical testimonies from artists such as Pierrot (2006) and Dolly Van Doll (Matos 2007) that describe in detail some of these experiences (in Mérida, 2015). In 1970 homosexuals were still classified as delinquents, but nonetheless the atmosphere seemed more relaxed and men were not so concerned with hiding all mannerisms. From 1975 onwards, homosexual references started populating the music industry in both the lyrics of the songs and well as the imagery and suggestive appearance of singers. In 1978 Gloria Gaynor sang 'I Will Survive', and the focus of homosexual representation took more of an international dimension by integrating foreign influences that were very much restricted during the Franco years.

According to Javier Ugarte, legislation in the rest of Europe in the 1970s was also repressive, but differently to Spain, 'in Europe [gay issues] were seen a psychiatric matter, in Spain they became moral matters due to the influence of the catholic church' (Ruiz Mantilla 2013: 52). The dictatorial regime also made it a matter of social class

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<sup>145</sup> The felony known as *escándalo público* (public scandal) legitimised the persecution of LGBT collectives, and led to the imprisonment of many with the invasive therapies mentioned above exposed by activist Armand de Fluvià (2003) and subsequently examined by Arnalte (2003), Mira (2004), Olmeda (2004) and Soriano Gil (2005), among others.

and penalised more heavily those who were single; married men were given less punitive sentences so that they could return to their wives. Gay men were persecuted during the regime and remained stigmatized during the early years of democracy while the Law of Social Danger was still active. Only in 1999 was a Law of Data Protection approved; all the information on police arrests of homosexuals during the Franco years and the early years of democracy was then deleted. Due to the data being in the system until 1999, homosexuals still suffered public humiliation on occasions by police enforcement (Ruiz Mantilla 2013: 57).

After the death of Franco, Spain started a process of transition to democracy during which political activism started to publicly address LGBT rights. Barcelona saw the birth of the first Spanish homosexual movement and the organization of the first Gay Pride parade. Public personalities like cartoonist Nazario and painter Ocaña attended in drag and were part of the events, but there was a long path ahead in the establishment of gay acceptance, and even the LGBT community was divided, with gay activists being 'reluctant to accept drag queens and performers taking over political demonstrations' (Mira 2013: 60).<sup>146</sup> During those years, artists were concerned with political change: 'any cultural manifestation, whether journalism, literature or painting, had an implicit subtext: this was the 'new' art, this was the 'new' Spain' (Mira 2013: 50). Among the main themes of the Spanish films of the transition, there was 'a short-lived obsession with political change, and morality and sexual issues'<sup>147</sup> because of the 1977 abolition of existing censorship laws (ibid). In the cultural manifestations of the transitional period to democracy, there was also an incipient obsession for *morbo*: a popular word in the period denoting prurient curiosity for what was forbidden (Mira 2013: 58).

### **2.3.3. The role of *copla* as marker of gender identity**

Before the popularization of the cinema and progressive introduction of radio in Spanish homes, the rural set-ups of post-war Spain relied on communitarian celebrations of song and dance, the only entertainment affordable. During the 1940s,

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<sup>146</sup> José Ocaña's description of life in Cantillana 'is orgiastic and sexually promiscuous, but at the same time, paradoxically, homophobia seemed to be extraordinarily intense and it is mentioned as one of the main causes for his departure' (Mira 2013: 58). 'Ocaña regarded the fascination towards new sexualities in democracy as unauthentic. [...] Although Ocaña uses drag, this is just, he claims, incidental. In his reluctance to accept labels imposed by cultural orthodoxy, we can distinguish an impulse which is more queer than gay, although this is not a distinction he makes' (Mira 2013: 60).

<sup>147</sup> 'Sexuality is praised and identities [are] nothing but stable: this was the age in which transvestites and transsexuals seemed to reign in the media, their fascination linked to ambivalence or fluidity' (Mira 2013: 53).

*copla* was a significant ‘cultural product’, and managed to expand the role model of women in tune with the official canons of the dictatorship through a process of oral transmission. This was part of the regime’s strategy to create a ‘national’ conscience in which they used *copla* to disseminate all kinds of stereotypes, images and symbols that conformed what meant to ‘be Spanish’.<sup>148</sup>

Women archetypes would be presented in the songs with a purpose of political manipulation. As Lucía Prieto Borrego points out, ‘it is difficult to admit that *copla*, one of the instruments with more assimilationist capacity, was not used with socializing purposes’ (Prieto 2016: 291).<sup>149</sup> *Copla*’s lyrics in the 1940s would already define the formal and thematic aspects of the genre for the remaining decades of the dictatorship. The contents of many songs have a common denominator: stories featuring key roles for women displaying behaviour and facing situations that the regime considered transgressions against the official morality and therefore worthy of punishment. These transgressions included prostitution, adultery, extra-marital maternity, pre-marital cohabitation, concubinage, spinsterhood and independence. *Copla* songs warned through their stories about the dangers of straying from the path imposed by the regime.<sup>150</sup>

In this context, *copla* acquires a value of nationalist vehemence. Women in *copla* considered themselves representative of the ‘Spanish virtues’, and their private lives would be spread so their image would respond to the stereotypes of Hispanic

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<sup>148</sup> For more information about this ‘national’ strategy, I refer to Vázquez Montalbán (2000).

<sup>149</sup> ‘Es difícil admitir que la copla, uno de los instrumentos con mayor capacidad de asimilación por cualquier sector de población no fuera utilizado con fines socializadores’ (Prieto 2016: 291).

<sup>150</sup> A few examples in Prieto 2016: ‘A todas es común la fatalidad de un destino que las ha convertido en mercancía como a *La Lirio*; en alcohólicas como a *Dolores La Petenera* y a *La Parrala*; en asesinas como *Consolación*, *la de Utrera* y a todas en desterradas. A través de sus historias, el cante advertía de lo que podía ocurrir a quienes entregaban “su honra” antes del matrimonio y a la vez buscaba la empatía con vidas desgraciadas y envilecidas cuya única posibilidad de redención era el confinamiento en los establecimientos del Patronato’ (295). A terrible fate common to all women has transformed them into merchandise (*La Lirio*), alcoholics (*Dolores La Petenera* and *La Parrala*), murderers (*Consolación la de Utrera*) or exiled (all of them). Through these stories, *copla* songs warned about what could happen to those who gave up their virtue before marriage, but they also sought empathy with those unfortunate and degraded lives whose only opportunity for redemption was confinement in the establishment. ‘La copla sublima a la mujer casada y no parece casualidad que en la década de los cuarenta se fijen el conjunto de representaciones que amenazan al matrimonio. La sagrada institución es evocada en la obra de Rafael de León mediante una simbología tan sugerente como cargada de ideología patriarcal: el anillo que descubre *La Zaramora* en su amante; el velo blanco y los azahares que nunca lucirá “la otra” y la negación de un apellido que solo los varones pueden transmitir y que convierte en paria a cualquier madre soltera’ (316). *Copla* songs ennoble married women and it does not seem casual that in 1940s the threats to marriage were fixed. Marriage is evoked in the work of (lyricist) Rafael de León through a suggestive symbolism charged as well with patriarchal ideology: the ring that *La Zaramora* discovers on her lover, the white veil and orange blossom flowers that will never be worn by ‘the other one’ (*Romance de la otra*), and the negation of a surname [in Spain at birth children inherit a surname from each of their parents] that only men can transmit and that turns every single mother into an outcast (*Y sin embargo te quiero*).

femininity (Zurián 2005). This connects to Wolf's idea of stardom in musical film and theatre, only that in Francoist Spain, stardom served a political agenda of alienation. Stars in Spanish spectacle would respond to the name of *folklórica*, a denomination that originally referred to performers of Spanish folklore but later was restricted to women doing just Andalusian-flavoured spectacle.<sup>151</sup> The construction of the *folklórica* star system of the 1930s and 1940s 'was predicated on the model of the female entertainer/*cupletista* that dominated the genres of variety shows and the *género ínfimo*' (Woods 2004: 43).<sup>152</sup> The *mise en scène* would be of great importance in folkloric shows. Only women thought to have national-catholic virtues would be allowed to go on stage, especially when they sung about passions which were not easy to tolerate.

The female protagonists of *copla* inhabit a sensorial world of emotions, characterised by being over-affectionate, whimsical, displaying exaggerated feeling, and a thin will of purpose. From a medical point of view, women in *copla* have been often observed as hysterical, of sexual maturity but infantile intellect. During the Second Republic, *copla* was presented as a vehicle for the transgressive and sinning woman, but this stopped with the start of the dictatorship which censored and adapted existing songs to fit their bill (Prieto 2016: 317). The Spanish Civil War resulted in the exile of established artists, and a new generation of *folklóricas* emerged: they were 'women of strong catholic values, virgin until marriage, but passionate and feminine' (Woods 2004: 40).<sup>153</sup> 'Although the *folklórica* icon was not a model of revolutionary resistance but rather one of negotiated class interests, the potential for imagined and vicarious solidarity for Spanish spectators was certainly possible' (Woods 2004: 41). There were some narratives that presented women who reacted to their unhappy destinies and humiliations by killing others. Prieto defines them as *las justicieras* (the righteous ones) (Prieto 2016: 311).

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<sup>151</sup> 'The term *folklórico* originally referred to both female, male and sometimes transvestite artists whose repertory included traditional regional songs or dances with hints of regional flourishes, regardless of the artist's own regional identity. The reduction of the term to mean only women who performed Andalusian folklore produced a negative connotation, partly because the term indiscriminately referred to any artist that dedicated themselves to any kind of remotely Andalusian spectacle. The term deserves problematizing given its instrumental links to shaping of female Spanishness' (Woods 2004: 57).

<sup>152</sup> As outlined in Chapter 1, *género ínfimo* refers to the erotic spectacle performed in cafés and concert halls catering to male audiences, that included racy songs and burlesque numbers.

<sup>153</sup> 'Folkloric musical comedy films such as *Suspiros de España/ Longings for Spain* (Benito Perojo, 1938), *Mariquilla Terremoto* (Perojo, 1939), *Torbellino* (Luis Marquina, 1941) and *Filigrana* (Marquina, 1949) flaunt myriad contradictory and ambiguous representations of womanhood throughout the performance of the female protagonist and *folklórica*. Such ambivalent gender constructions are the product of the juxtaposition of the ideological discourses of stardom with those that prescribed a static model of femininity based on traditional gendered discourses of domesticity and Catholicism' (Woods 2004: 40).

If the regime saw *copla* as a cultural component open to political usage, others just read these songs out of their historical context, and placed them 'in the timeless space of feeling' (Acosta Díez et al, 1994). There was a double game in *copla* that the dictatorship was not aware of or opted to ignore. Satisfied with the strong conservative images that the female singers presented, censors forgot about the narratives that the lyrics presented and about other possibilities of identification. Even when censorship managed to change some of the lyrics,<sup>154</sup> beyond those changes, *copla* songs reflected the emotional experience of those the regime had condemned to silence because of their sexuality: homosexuals, transsexuals, etc. Because these communities had very few models to recycle these emotions in a discourse, *copla* implicitly became a shared vehicle of identification. *Copla* lyricists like Rafael de León hid strong male homosexual connotations in verses narrated by female voices. Nevertheless, these songs attracted a huge gay crowd that would identify with these narratives even when sung by a female voice. Some examples can be found in songs like *Romance de la otra* ('Romance of the Other One') in which the lyrics '*yo soy la otra que a nada tiene derecho*' (I am the 'other one' that has no rights) could easily apply to the homosexual experience (Pérez 2009: 63-64).

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the male presence onstage in the Spanish variety show was almost non-existent, whereas in other European countries this was more regular. Italian impersonator artist Fregoli<sup>155</sup> became an inspiration for male artists in Spain to cross-dress in racy shows (Pérez 2009: 56). From Fregoli onwards, many male variety artists including Edmond de Bries practised cross-dressing onstage. However, when their only characters were female, they were soon stigmatised as homosexuals. Homosexuality and transvestism were often confused and associated with *copla* and *cuplé*, the song genres that star impersonators most often performed. While lesbian attitudes were seen as 'provocations' when performed by uninhibited stage performers, any homosexual male activity was deemed unforgivable (Pérez 2009: 61). Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Spain women slowly achieved some level of social liberation, the most progressive could smoke, drive or wear trousers; men on the contrary would not be allowed to lose their macho role, especially during the dictatorship, neither expressing feelings in public or performing in variety shows.

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<sup>154</sup> The regime tried to forbid or alter the lyrics of popular songs like *Tatuaje* (Tattoo) or *Ojos verdes* (Green Eyes) but those attempts were rarely successful as people knew the original versions. In *Ojos verdes*, for instance there was a substitution of 'mancebía' (brothel) for 'casa mía' (my house).

<sup>155</sup> Fregoli was the first drag artist of modern history. He would impersonate up to 100 characters within a show, some of them women. His fame led to the denomination of the Fregoli syndrome, which consists in seeing the same face in different people, or to confuse the face of a person you are close to with that of a stranger. For more information, see Pérez (2009).

With the start of Franco's dictatorship in 1939, there was an immediate ceasing of variety spectacle that included cross-dressing and all other 'immoral manifestations of art' (Pérez 2006: 61). While censorship policed any artistic representation that could be seen by the censors as an affront against Spanish morals, Miguel de Molina, one of the first male *copla* performers who gained considerable fame, was a declared homosexual. This led to concrete associations between *copla* and homosexuality, and so when *copla* took over as the main cultural product in Spain, it became fundamentally a female form of expression. These songs predominantly expressed emotions in relation to love affairs, something men were implicitly forbidden to do in public. The male singers who wanted to preserve an image of virility adapted their repertoire to the needs of the time and performed songs of no direct emotional relevance, like Pepe Blanco and his *Cocidito Madrileño* ('Madrilenian Stew'), or with a different focus that did not involve a relationship, like Juanito Valderrama and his songs *El emigrante* ('The Emigrant') and *Mi Salamanca* ('My Salamanca'). There were male artists too who resisted this change of focus and sang the repertoire that was popularised by female artists like Concha Piquer or Juanita Reina, advocating a more mannered (gay) art. These artists included the likes of Miguel de Molina, Rafael Conde or Tomás de Antequera, and acquired a level of success celebrated in Spain first and their places of exile consequently. In any case, Spanish *copla* during the dictatorship was almost exclusively performed by women or by homosexuals rejected by the regime. These male homosexual performers experienced different journeys of censorship, imprisonment, torture, prohibition and exile in their lives.<sup>156</sup>

In late 1960s and early 1970s, when *copla* started losing followers,<sup>157</sup> a new visibility of cross-dressers and transvestites in subversive venues would start to perform the songs for wider audiences. The 1970s saw the birth of gay icons, which were the main *copla* singers of the last decade, and the favourite subjects of star

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<sup>156</sup> 'En la última actuación de la gira de Miguel de Molina en 1939 en el Teatro Pavón del Rastro de Madrid, dos individuos le recriminaron su comportamiento sexual y, terminada la gala, varios hombres le llevaron a un descampado, donde le golpearon con pistolas, le cortaron el pelo, le hicieron beber aceite de ricino y le dejaron desmayado. Se prohibieron sus películas, sus discos y sus actuaciones, y se le confinó en un pueblo de Extremadura, por lo que en 1942 huyó a Buenos Aires, aunque su establecimiento definitivo en América llegó en 1946, al comprobar que continuaba la persecución' (elmundo.es, 2018). During the last performance of Miguel de Molina's tour in 1939 at the Teatro Pavón in the Rastro area of Madrid, two men reprimanded his sexual behaviour, and once the gala was over they took him to a waste ground where they hit him with guns, cut his hair, make him drink castor oil and left him unconscious. His films, recordings and performances were prohibited, and he was confined to a village in Extremadura; because of this, he escaped to Buenos Aires in 1942. However, he finally settled in America in 1946 when he verified that his persecution (in Spain) still continued.

<sup>157</sup> New singers like Raphael started attracting young homosexual audiences who, in the absence of national idols, clung to songs like *Digan lo que digan* (Whatever They Say) and *Qué sabe nadie* (What Do They Know?). Once in 1970s, Franco's death seemed more imminent and sexual liberation became filled with more explicit messages (Pérez 2009: 64).

impersonators, especially Sara Montiel (Pérez 2009: 65). The change of female stereotype from Lola Flores to Sara Montiel is fundamental in understanding the change happening in Spain during this period. There was a female 'upgrade' from the representation of traditional values, sensual, strong but also immaculate and firm in its terrestrial principles; to the cosmopolitanism, the image of a woman of the world, experienced in her relationships with men (Castro de Paz 2005: 112). Judith Butler's interest in the performativity of drag works to sustain her argument of gender being performable. Drag artists 'learn' gender behaviours, aspects of femininity (or masculinity in the case of drag kings), through which they exercise a separation of their anatomical sex from their performed gender: 'It might be, only by risking the *incoherence* of identity that connection is possible' (Butler 1993: 113). The female stereotypes described above depict theatricality; therefore, female drag impersonations will also involve theatricality, artificiality, and exaggeration. These performances can be politically challenging as, for instance, the parodic aspects can be taken as misogynistic (a critique of female identity). However, for Butler, 'all gender identities represent a kind of drag performance insofar as all are produced through acts of impersonation' (Savran 2003: 74).<sup>158</sup>

As described in Chapter 1, after Franco's death and the abolition of censorship, Spain witnessed an erotic boom that affected the development of spectacle. This erotic boom was in the first instance heterosexual, but gave way to the incipient exposure of 'trans' spectacle (Mérida 2015). Police controls became more irregular, the 'trans' presence became less stigmatised and more visible, and audiences stopped fearing the 'unknown' and drawn by their curiosity for what had been long forbidden, could now easily access this kind of spectacle. In this period (late 1970s and early 1980s), 'trans' theatre flourished<sup>159</sup> and was central to a cultural movement known as La Movida, that had its epicentre in Madrid and involved artists like film director Pedro Almodóvar and singer Alaska. This 'trans' scenario updated the pre-Civil war shows in which 'star impersonators' would cross-dress on stage to imitate *copla* singers. During these early democratic years – and different to the 1920s and early '30s - 'trans' also involved the

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<sup>158</sup> In Butler's words: 'there is no original or primary gender that drag imitates, but gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original' (Butler 1993: 313).

<sup>159</sup> Rodríguez Méndez's play *Autumn Flower* presents the story of an apparently shy docile lawyer from the Barcelona bourgeoisie that by night becomes a star impersonator with the name of 'Flor de Otoño', the play's title. He also leads a double life as an anarchist plotting to kill dictator Primo de Rivera. This play presents the subversive 'trans' world of the Barcelona of the 1920s and early '30s, when female impersonators enjoyed a golden age in historical key venues before the Spanish Civil War, such as Bataclán or La Criolla, both situated in Barcelona's Barrio Chino – an area off the Ramblas that Jean Genet also wrote about (Rodríguez Méndez 1979): 'Flor de Otoño' was a character from the Barrio Chino working as a transvestite in a cabaret together with other stars of the time such as La Cubanita and La Asturianita (see Thompson 2007).

adoption of a visibility off-stage. Trans became a statement on identity and politics as much as an artistic expression.

Camp in the Spanish tradition gave shape to emotions that could not be expressed due to 'political' silencing. This was evidenced during Franco's repression and it is manifest with the usage given to the new discourses of *copla*. In the transition to democracy this camp re-appropriation of *copla* became very popular, with an incipient number of artists performing the songs in drag. For instance, Spanish painter Ocaña, primarily known for his role in exposing sexual liberation during transition to democracy, promenaded in full drag 'along the Ramblas followed by crowds of onlookers, sing[ing] the Quintero, León and Quiroga *copla Yo soy esa* ('I am That Woman')' (Mira 2013: 60).<sup>160</sup> *Copla* songs could no longer be defined as escapist entertainment because the singers faced their own emotions (Zurián 2005). *Copla* started to represent the queer demographic who embraced the form publicly, acquiring a new political dimension. This takes us into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with the recent emergence of artists like Falete, a male singer who performs a sentimental *copla* where he dresses up with feminine outfits but without hiding his gender, becoming an androgynous identity.

*The Copla Musical* presents a queer reinterpretation of *copla* across different layers: the main character is a transgender artist that in the piece represents the marginal collectives that have historically identified with the form, as well as the non-normative sexual collectives that have embraced these songs since the return to democracy in 1975. The project is also queer in that for the first time it is trying to transform a song genre that has been firmly associated with different forms of Spanish identity – queer but also national-catholic – and bring it to a different cultural set-up and language. *Copla* songs translated and performed in English provide an alternative theatrical context that further queers the original material. In the following chapter, I will present the evolution of the project from inception to completion and discuss the implications and effects that the PaR has considered and addressed throughout its development.

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<sup>160</sup> When Ventura Pons presented his 1978 documentary film about Ocaña at the Cannes Film Festival, 'the film proved a critical success and the press conference following the screening featured Ocaña himself singing a *copla* and enjoying the attention of international critics' (Mira 2013: 62). For more information on Ocaña's political performances in the transition to democracy in Spain, see Rodríguez Solás (2018).

### CHAPTER 3. MAKING *COPLA*: ARTICULATING THEORY THROUGH PRACTICE

*The Copla Musical* is the accompanying practice to this thesis. This theatre project started developments in early 2011, with a first work-in-progress presentation taking place in Hoxton Hall on 5 May 2011. Since then, the project has acquired several formats, approaching the intercultural adaptation of *copla* from different angles. The legacy of this practical investigation are three professional shows that have been presented internationally to a variety of multicultural audiences. These shows share the main principle of adapting *copla* songs; however, the nature and structure in which songs are integrated in each show differs, giving room to three distinct pieces that are independent from each other.

I first thought of the creation of an intercultural, modern *copla* musical as a process to throw light on the rejuvenation of *copla*, following the fundamental principles of creating musicals in a globalized 21<sup>st</sup> century. As such, this research identified the discourses of dramaturgy and performance style in the context of the dominant paradigms of musical theatre produced in America and Britain that I discussed in Chapter 1. I also wanted to explore how an intercultural approach would challenge the creation of a 'commercial' musical by bringing international cultural material, in this case *copla*, into a well-defined Anglo-American musical theatre structure. As seen in Chapter 2, the practice generates questions that challenge, renew or complement current theory about theatre translation and intercultural adaptation.<sup>161</sup> In previous chapters I have defined *The Copla Musical* as an intercultural musical, a hybrid form that borrows integrated and non-integrated models (book musicals, revues, jukebox musicals) from dominant paradigms in both British and American musical theatre. In this chapter I will analyse the dramaturgical, musical and performance elements in use for the production and reception of the different iterations of this project.

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<sup>161</sup> The debates occurring between the theories of Pavis (1990), Lo and Gilbert (2002), and Ortiz (in Taylor, 1991) as discussed in Chapter 2.2.4 on relationships between practice, theory and history are considered in my practice as a way of finding further innovative ways for musical theatre to develop within an international framework. The principle is to give voice to cultures that can complement and expand the creative possibilities within the dominant musical theatre industry. The relationships described by scholars like Pavis (1990) and Fischer-Lichte (1990) are predominantly analysed in reference to east-west relationships and rarely cover exchanges that are fully placed in the western world, where political dynamics of dependence and control are not as marked. My practice sets an example of using interculturalism in the context of negotiating two western traditions.

### 3.1. FIRST ITERATION: *THE COPLA MUSICAL AS A 'CONVENTIONAL' BOOK MUSICAL (2011-13)*<sup>162</sup>

In 2011, I started playing with the idea of creating a musical with *copla* songs. Consequently, the first iteration of *The Copla Musical* was conceived with the intention of following a 'book musical' structure, defined in Chapter 1 as the combination of lyrics and a script to construct a linear narrative. A book musical in its conventional use of the term is also seen as a musical where song and dance are integrated in the storyline and attributed narrative functions, therefore the selection and integration of songs was a key part of this process. As explained in Chapter 1, the practice implied applying principles from jukebox musicals which re-use popular songs, and considering the nature of Tin Pan Alley songs, musical comedies and revues given the historical parallels with the *copla* songs that were to be used. In this section, I will analyse in some detail the paradigms that have been applied to the creation of *The Copla Musical*. I will then demonstrate how the dramaturgical principles which pertain to integrated (book musical) or non-integrated (revues, jukebox) musical theatre styles have informed the writing of this first iteration of *The Copla Musical*.

In terms of structure, book musicals are normally structured in two acts of approximately 80 and 45 minutes respectively; and combine songs, scenes and dance numbers in the telling of an overarching story that has a cliff-hanger at the end of Act 1 and a resolution at the end of Act 2. Most current musicals adhere to this configuration, and *The Copla Musical* was initially written to follow this structure too. From early 2011 to late 2012, the piece went through a long phase of development that involved the creation of a narrative around a selection of popular Spanish *copla* songs. The narrative would follow the challenging love story of drag artist La Gitana and her American lover (known as El Americano) from the Spanish Civil War to America, but the details of this story were constantly subject to change in favour of plausible elements that would add practicality, integrity and credibility to the narrative. As part of this process, some of the songs were also changed, replaced by others that would better fit and add information to some specific elements of the narrative created.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> The work can be seen through the following links (further links provided at the end of the chapter):  
**Act 1, Collisions 2013:** <https://youtu.be/pttULqEYoLw>  
**Act 2, Collisions 2012:** <https://youtu.be/H2yiTkUSYdY>

<sup>163</sup> Songs *Zorongo gitano*, *La guapa*, *Herencia gitana*, *El beso*, *Si vas a Calatayud*, *La morena de mi copla*, *Mi jaca*, *En tierra extraña*, and *Un pañolito blanco* were taken out of the project and eventually replaced with others such as *Carceleras del puerto*, *Me debes un beso*, *Las tardes del Ritz*, *Sola en la vida*, *Suspiros de España* and *Ay pena penita pena* that best fitted some narrative moments, and *Don triquetraque* and *Campanera*, songs that described important characters in *The Copla Musical*.

With a view to breaking down the structural elements that are central to the creative process of this project, I will subsequently formulate a set of analytical principles with which to assess these materials (the libretto, score, production). The analysis provided of this practice is structured under the categories of dramaturgical principles and song adaptations. In these sections, I aim to expose a creative process and working methodology that could potentially be applied to further artistic practices. This set of tools derives from the aforementioned musical theatre paradigms (book musical, revue, jukebox), and is supported by examples and demonstrations within *The Copla Musical*. In order to understand and signpost specific examples within the practice, I will start by providing a synopsis of *The Copla Musical* as developed throughout its first iteration. There is a two-act division and the *copla* songs reflecting various narrative moments are included in parenthesis.

#### Synopsis:

Act 1: In the last stages of the Spanish Civil War, a group of Republicans from the Resistance are still fighting in Cádiz, Andalusia, to resist the Rebel forces (also known as the Nationalists). Part of this group is La Gitana, a transgender woman that entertains the Resistance troupes in a Republican hideout club known as Utopia, and on occasion acts as a spy. La Gitana is now locked up in Santa María's prison accused of forging her identity to save her friend, the Republican icon Campanera. La Gitana laments her terrible fate in the small cell in which she is being held ('Jailer of the Port'). The day before the end of the war, La Gitana is freed from Santa María's prison by her Republican comrades. The Cádiz Resistance is planning a final attack on the Nationalist fronts that night and they need La Gitana to act as a courier for them. During the escape from prison, La Gitana and her Republican comrades coincidentally meet an American salesman in the port ('Señor Firecracker'). La Gitana and 'El Americano' recognize each other secretly, as they had a love affair before the start of the War. But La Gitana is taken to Utopia and is reminded of the importance of the Republican plans and her mission for that night. Once in Utopia, La Gitana becomes the entertainer she used to be, embracing her female persona, and she sings to the troupes about an old love affair she remembers with an American lover ('Tattoo'). El Americano, who has been following the Republicans, interrupts her show to profess his love for her. La Gitana runs away scared, and El Americano is asked to leave, but he sneaks into La Gitana's dressing room and asks her for a kiss ('You Owe Me a Kiss'). Campanera interrupts the flirtation, chases El Americano out and reminds La Gitana of the importance of her mission. La Gitana takes a gun that Campanera offers her and goes to the port to fulfil her mission. At the port, she meets a Nationalist Sergeant and

poses as a prostitute. The Sergeant insists on La Gitana spending the night with him but El Americano arrives to rescue her. As they leave, Campanera is captured and killed by the Sergeant. La Gitana reacts by shooting the Sergeant. El Americano takes a distressed La Gitana to spend the night with him at his hostel, where she explains who she really is and who Campanera was ('Campanera'). The following morning, La Gitana wakes up to news on the radio that the Nationalist forces have won the war. She realizes that she didn't manage to fulfil her mission and blames herself for the outcome. El Americano then asks her to leave with him to America to escape from the upcoming fascist regime ('Tell Me That You Love Me'). La Gitana agrees to leave on the condition that her mother, the only relative she still has, accompanies them. All three sail to America ('Farewell España').

Act 2: Once in America, La Gitana lives as a woman and becomes a star of variety with the help of El Americano ('The Ritz Afternoons'). After one of her performances, she is greeted by Pincho, a fellow transvestite from her past times at Utopia. Pincho escaped to America during the Spanish Civil War, but she hasn't managed to secure regular work. Pincho flirts with El Americano who, attracted by her, asks about her past ('Life Can Be Lonely'). La Gitana's mother is suspicious of Pincho, but La Gitana is naïve at not realizing that Pincho is after El Americano. Once the USA enters the Second World War, Carnegie Hall organizes a concert to gather funds for the war effort and El Americano manages to include La Gitana in the program. Just before her performance, she discovers that Pincho and her Americano are having an affair and decides to leave, but her mother reminds her of her true passion of singing and La Gitana sings to the assembled audience about her heartbreak ('But I Love You Anyway'). Realizing her struggle to merge her Spanish past with her American future, La Gitana is determined to leave behind her life in the USA and migrate to Argentina to join other exiled *copla* artists, but El Americano follows her to the port and asks her to stay ('I Swear This to You'). Not coping with the pressure, La Gitana faints and sees the phantom of her old comrade Campanera, who advises her to go back to Spain and join her Republican comrades in their fight against Franco's regime ('Maria de la O'). La Gitana wakes up in hospital, and tells El Americano that she wants to do a final performance in Spain. He however is no longer interested in helping her as he has found new potential in Pincho and he leaves her ('The Fairly Paid'). La Gitana and her mother sail back to Spain despite her mother's wishes to remain in a safer land ('Sighs of Spain'). Back in Spain, La Gitana visits Utopia, now converted into a fascist bar where her old Republican comrades now work under the terms of the regime. Once Utopia is about to close, La Gitana requests her old friends leave her alone on her old

stage, where she will offer her final performance to an empty audience and the phantoms of their life ('Sorrow').

### **3.1.1. Dramaturgical principles of *The Copla Musical***

Book musicals follow a series of dramaturgical principles that *The Copla Musical* tries to adhere to. In his manual *How Musicals Work: And How to Write Your Own*, Julian Woolford specifies that every musical 'is made up of many components, primarily narrative, time, location, characters, musical style and physical style and a number of other key decisions, which largely fall, in some way, into each of these categories' (2013: 226). These categories are an updated version of other previous relevant classifications that go as far back as Aristotle and his identification of six elements of tragedy - namely plot, character, thought, speech, melody and spectacle. Lehman Engel (1910– 82), composer and musical director during the 'Golden Age' of the Broadway musical, outlined what he identifies as the six 'needs' of a musical that are transposable from Aristotle's elements of tragedy. Engel's elements for a book musical are feeling, subplot, romance, lyrics and particularisation, music and comedy (Engel 2006: 49).

In this section I will try to analyse *The Copla Musical* in the context of Woolford's classification of the musical's theatrical language. What follows is a commentary of the categories and dramaturgical principles addressed in this practice, namely character, time and location, with the musical aspects of the piece handled in the next section (3.1.2). In book musicals, there is normally room for one main plot and several subplots. The plot of the musical normally boils down to a theme, in opposition to plays where several themes are sometimes contrasted. The plot is most often accompanied by subplots giving room to different situations and double reactions. The main theme in *The Copla Musical* is freedom, but there are a series of secondary interwoven themes: family relationships and comradeship in a political context (the Spanish Civil War), the rise to stardom, cross-dressing as a means of sexual liberation, and intercultural romance as an escapist move towards the unknown. These themes are inspired by the cultural and political values of *copla* and its potential interaction with a new culture.

The songs of the Golden Age musicals represented time, place, and character. Previously to the book musical, a successful musical had consisted of numerous terrific (Tin Pan Alley) songs that could stand on their own outside of the show (Wolf 2002: 28). Equally, *copla* songs became more popular outside the revue shows they were

initially presented in. *The Copla Musical* aims to create a modern transition between the Spanish revues and the book musical. With that purpose, *copla* songs are brought together to narrate the story of one main character who deals with a series of themes influenced by political circumstances and historical events in turn suggested by the songs.

McMillin, Woolford and other scholars consider time and location as essentials to the accurate construction of narrative in book musicals. The author must consider the timeframe of the story and how this is communicated.<sup>164</sup> It is important to consider the period, 'time gaps' between scenes, and if time is told chronologically or if there are flashbacks and flash-forwards. Equally, the number of specific locations will be crucial to the staging of the piece. The author must think of other considerations, such as the style of the set (realistic, abstract, suggestive) and the existence of a fourth wall (Woolford 2013: 230).<sup>165</sup> In practical terms, the action must happen in a specific place or special milieu. This involves creating a world (a time and a place) and keeping the characters there. The tacit relationship of continuity between time and space is often challenged in contemporary musicals.<sup>166</sup> *The Copla Musical* also challenges the continuity of time and space primarily by situating the action of Act 1 in Cádiz (Spain) during the final day of the Spanish Civil War (31<sup>st</sup> March 1939), and the action of Act 2 in New York, starting in the spring of 1939 with a duration of a couple of years. Each act therefore establishes a distinct use of narrative time, as plot points develop throughout a specific timeframe. This show also challenges the use of time through several flashbacks and flash-forwards that provide key pieces of information to understand either a part of the narrative or a character's motivation, as well as helping to recreate some essential historical episodes in the context of La Gitana's life. Acts 1 and 2, being so distinct from each other, can be presented independently as self-contained narratives with their own resolutions, however the coherence established

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<sup>164</sup> For instance, '*West Side Story* takes place over three days, but Marsha Norman's play '*Night, Mother* is a time=play, [that is] a play in which the time taken to perform the play is the same as the time the characters' experience' (Woolford 2013: 229).

<sup>165</sup> 'A convention in naturalistic plays and musicals in which there is an imaginary wall onstage where the proscenium arch is. The audience are looking through the "fourth wall" at the stage. In productions where the fourth wall is "dropped", both the actors and the audience believe that the actors can see the fourth wall and that the characters the actors are playing are not aware that they are in a theatre. In a production where the fourth wall is "broken", the characters and the audience are aware of each other. For example, *Guys and Dolls* (1950) and *My Fair Lady* (1956) drop the fourth wall and *Godspell* (1971) has a fourth wall that is broken' (Woolford 2013: 230).

<sup>166</sup> This rule has been broken in musical theatre in some occasions: for instance, the order of place is disrupted when the protagonists of Frank Loesser's *Guys and Dolls* (1950) have a quick escapade trip to Havana; equally in Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984) there is a significant time division between Acts 1 and 2, happening centuries apart and across different time spans.

between the two in terms of character evolution and theatrical style sustains the structural coherence of the piece as a book musical.

An effective way to describe musical theatre characters is using archetypes that represent typical examples of a certain type of person, the imitation of an original.<sup>167</sup> It is important to note the difference between the commonly confused ideas of archetypes and stereotypes.<sup>168</sup> Woolford considers four major archetypes key for the construction of musicals: the Hero, the Shadow (or villain), the Mentor and the Shapeshifter (or romantic interest) (2013: 116-118). These are often found in musicals but there are no set rules about them. In *The Copla Musical*, the main characters adhere to these archetypes, but there is also a certain level of subversion in regard to the characters' objectives, identities and sexualities.

The Hero is commonly the protagonist of the story. This archetype responds to notions of sacrifice and endurance, as the Hero goes through a journey (as explained in the stages of the monomyth) that will transform him/her. Traditionally the journey of the Hero involves a separation from his/her status quo into an unfamiliar or challenging world to eventually return to his/her world transformed after learning from the obstacles s/he has encountered in the journey. La Gitana responds well to this archetype, as the character experiences a vast transformation and learning experience through her journey from Spain to America and back again. As a transgender woman, she also subverts the traditional gender identity of the archetype, most commonly attributed to men, and on occasion, to women. The essence of the Hero is the sacrifice s/he makes to achieve his/her goal. This is true of La Gitana, who will sacrifice her comfortable American life to join her resistance comrades in Franco's Spain. Other characters besides the protagonist can have heroic qualities, e.g. Campanera.

The Shadow is a negative figure that represents things that an audience is not encouraged to like or approve of, and would therefore like to eliminate. The Shadow is often the antagonist of the story, and s/he must be a worthy opponent for the Hero to struggle. The Shadow doesn't see him/herself as a villain and will fight the Hero to the end. The Shadow in *The Copla Musical* shifts from being the Nationalists in Act 1 to El Americano as Act 2 advances. The Nationalists represent the fascist ideals La Gitana and her Republican comrades want to eradicate. With the Nationalist victory,

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<sup>167</sup> In Jungian theory, an archetype is a primitive mental image inherited from the earliest human ancestors, and supposed to be present in the collective unconscious. The archetype has since become a recurrent symbol or motif in literature, art, or mythology (Oxfordreference.com).

<sup>168</sup> Stereotypes deal with cliché; they often apply to groups of people in society and can be offensive, such as the clichéd stereotype of the camp homosexual. An archetype can be portrayed as a stereotype: for instance, the figure of a 'mentor' is an archetype, but to portray the role as an old man living in a cave has become a stereotype (Woolford 2013: 115).

Republicans will be eliminated from the political and social spheres of Spanish life. Once in America, La Gitana will depend on El Americano, and he will eventually betray her to pursue his own financial interests.<sup>169</sup> El Americano represents a capitalist system that initially seduces La Gitana but that she eventually rejects in favour of a more honourable cause, the fight for freedom led by nostalgia for her homeland.

The Mentor is a character that aids or advises the Hero. This archetype has qualities such as wisdom and noble ideals, and exercises a strong influence on the Hero. Campanera is an obvious Mentor to La Gitana, but when she dies, her role is somehow taken by La Gitana's mother, a very different type of mentor. However, the Mentor may occasionally be the Hero's conscience, returning him/her to the right path after s/he strays or strengthening him/her when s/he weakens. Campanera's apparition to La Gitana in Act 2 constitutes a key mentorship moment that defines the course of events.

As expressed by Melinda Goodin, the Shapeshifter changes role or personality, often in significant ways, and is a character hard to understand. That very changeability is the essence of this archetype. The Shapeshifter's alliances and loyalty are uncertain, and the sincerity of his/her claims is often questionable. This keeps the Hero off guard. The Shapeshifter is often a person of the opposite sex, often the Hero's romantic interest (Goodin 2018). This definition responds very accurately to the character of El Americano. The most common dramatic function of the Shapeshifter is to bring suspense into a story by making the audience question his or her intentions. As with the other archetypes, any character can take on attributes of the Shapeshifter at different times in the story, and mentors often appear as shapeshifters. I would say this applies to several characters in Act 2 including Campanera, Pincho and El Americano.

Below is a table that summarises the archetype classification in *The Copla Musical* as discussed in this section.

	ACT 1	ACT 2
The Hero	La Gitana	La Gitana
The Shadow	The Nationalists	El Americano
The Mentor	Campanera	The Mother
The Shapeshifter	El Americano	Pincho/ Campanera

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<sup>169</sup> This presents a metaphor for what happened in Spain in the 1950s with America coming to aid Franco financially.

Secondary characters in musicals are often overtly expressive or 'larger than life' to provide contrast with the lead.<sup>170</sup> In *The Copla Musical*, characters represent a mixture of Spanish and non-Spanish melodramatic stereotypes, such as the stage mother that accompanies the folkloric star (who in turn is her gay 'transvestite' son). This stereotype is commonly found in Spanish folkloric movies such as *Las cosas del querer* ('The Things of Love', 1989), plays like *Flor de Otoño* ('Autumn Flower', 1982), and it was parodied by theatre company La Cubana in their show *Cegada de amor* ('Blinded by Love', 1994). The femme fatale is presented in the form of a transvestite - the character of Pincho. Campanera, the woman soldier, represents the archetype of the Mentor, who turns the protagonist into a more solid depiction of the Hero archetype, the Republicans are pictured as long suffering companions, whereas the Nationalists represent true villains. Schism is set from the beginning of the musical. The character of El Americano establishes a cultural bridge between Spanish and Anglo-American cultures. This character is influenced by who he meets and what he sees, and he experiences the most pronounced dramatic arc of all characters. Through his eyes, Anglophone audiences can enter the world of *copla* and, by association, Spain: he is a culture bearer, another chain in the transfer of knowledge because audiences can relate to his foreign experience.<sup>171</sup>

Finally, there are a few practical considerations such as the number of actors needed in relation to the number of characters written. There are musicals in which actors play a role within a role, or actors consciously playing a character as opposed to 'being the character'. This happens to a certain extent with the part of La Gitana, who transforms from male to female during her stage appearances to eventually undertake more of a female identity throughout the show.<sup>172</sup> Dominic Symonds poses the question of multi-roles, and affirms that in musicals it is common that lead actors play one role versus ensemble characters who play multiple roles (2014: 278). This is also the case in *The Copla Musical*, where the cast can be scaled down to 6 actors or expanded to 10+ with the participation of an ensemble that could boost musical numbers. In its 2011 work-in-progress presentation in Hoxton Hall (London), the cast was comprised of 10 actors out of which only 4 played leading parts. The rest configured an ensemble that, choreographed by Miriam Faura, boosted the musical

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<sup>170</sup> The musical comedy conventions of the 1920s presented the secondary romantic leads (the soubrette and her paramour) as comic relief until book musicals like *Carousel* (1945) added more depth to these roles. Rodgers and Hammerstein developed those stereotypes and found new figures, such as the motherly sort who provides a degree of wisdom and comfort, or the comic villain.

<sup>171</sup> 'The translator of the culture is not a mere agent, as a translator of words might be, but an actual culture-bearer' (Schechner 1991: 314).

<sup>172</sup> Further gender/queer considerations will be discussed in the Solo section (3.2).

numbers with flamenco-contemporary dance routines and choral singing. In 2012, for the development of Act 2, the cast was reduced to 6 actors, with one playing several parts. In 2013, the cast was extended to 8 actors and this version also involved a degree of multiple role play. The final version of *The Copla Musical* as a book musical is very much character-based. It could be performed with a cast of 6 to 8 actors involving some multiple roles, with characters grouped according to their physiognomy and to the values they represent, so the audience can more easily associate faces to concept (for instance, the actor playing the Nationalist Guard in Act 1 will play Pincho in Act 2, remaining a sort of antagonist). The piece could also be re-worked to integrate a dance ensemble and more choral numbers, although that would involve a reconsideration of some characters and a significant budget increase.

### **3.1.2. Musical aspects of the production**

#### **3.1.2.1. The jukebox rationale**

The distinguishing feature of a musical is that songs play an integral relationship in the narrative. This means that the songs created need to be capable of forwarding plot, developing character, commenting on the action or otherwise functioning in the storytelling (Woolford 2013: 298).

According to Millie Taylor, all elements of the integrated musical 'are linked in a common endeavour to present a coherent development of plot and character' (2012: 58). Musical theatre songs play a key part in this purpose of integration, which is defined by the songs' narrative intentions. Pop songs are generally not written with this narrative intention but rather to stand alone as products designed for 'lazy listening', that is, 'to be listened to, lazily, many times' (Woolford 2013: 301).<sup>173</sup> Therefore, they are difficult to use in musicals. Differently to pop songs, 'the musical-theatre song is designed to be heard once, in a dramatic situation, and must form an integral part of the action' (ibid). In integrated musicals, songs do not exist only for entertainment value, but they develop story, mood and themes, communicating drama through music. From Rodgers and Hammerstein onwards, lyricists and composers became dramatists, using songs to develop character and advance the plot, giving all elements in musicals a dramatic function. Songs should express the deepest thoughts and feelings of the characters at dramatic moments. Lyrics must describe specific actions and events

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<sup>173</sup> Woolford affirms that they are 'written to be the background music of our lives and it is the very generality of the songs that makes them popular' (298).

within the story and follow the natural speech patterns of the characters in the vernacular of the play, starting as a continuation of dialogue (Brown 2007).

I have established that pop songs are challenging to integrate in musicals, and *copla* songs can be thought of as the Spanish pop of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even though *copla* songs were mostly written to be performed in theatre shows, their narratives centred around dramatic individual stories, so they adapt with difficulty to ensemble numbers. The dramatic flavour of the genre also complicates the comedy situations that are frequently found in musical theatre. Musicals combine big ensemble numbers with solos and duets, comedic and dramatic songs to express a wide range of emotions. The main challenge of writing *The Copla Musical* is to envision a libretto that is suitable for the insertion of pre-existing *copla* songs, thus a libretto able to accommodate *copla* songs and not the other way around. The creative process involving the selection, adaptation and arrangement of songs, needs to pay attention to characters going through dramatic instances suggested by the song's pre-existing narratives, even if that conditions their dramatic journeys. In translating *copla* for *The Copla Musical*, there is a double exercise of adjusting both the songs' lyrics and the narratives proposed by the libretto.

As seen in Chapter 1, *copla* is a musical genre that involves many idiosyncratic elements.<sup>174</sup> However, *copla* had its origins in the theatrical representations of the 18<sup>th</sup> century known as *intermedios* that strongly influenced *copla*'s theatrical quality. In this context, it is also worth considering the characteristics of *copla*'s forerunner, the *cuplé*, and its theatrical successor, the revue.<sup>175</sup> Dramatically, the *cuplé* also involved self-contained narratives, although these were not as complex as in *copla*, and featured racy and light-hearted subjects of French inspiration. In *The Copla Musical* there are a few *cuplé* songs that I use to enhance comedy moments, especially in Act 2, when La Gitana migrates to America. The use of *cuplé* allows me to step out of the strong Spanish influences intrinsic to *copla* songs. Thus, when La Gitana sings in America *Las tardes del Ritz* ('The Ritz Afternoons'), this *cuplé* song becomes plausible in terms of content and style within the dramatic situation. The same applies to *Sola en la vida*

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<sup>174</sup> Such as Andalusian phonetics, flamenco-flavoured music, gypsy-isms, *caló* words, and a theatrical display involving Spanish shawls, combs and tailed gown dresses with polka dots (García Piedra 2008: 188). Musically, *copla* inherits influences from musical genres such as '*pasodoble, zambra, vals, tango, bulerías, danzón, pasacalle, marcha, sevillanas, farruca, tientos*' (Hurtado 2003: 49), and represents a tragic story with referents to Andalusian topics.

<sup>175</sup> The *cuplé*, from the French couplet, gave room to *copla*, but originally featured some international rhythms that were later rescued in the revues. These included *pasodoble, chotis, foxtrot, tango, java, chacarera, polka, bolero, habanera, vals, samba, rumba*, etc. Many were imported from other countries, although those who remained most popular were *pasodoble, chotis* and *foxtrot* (Hurtado 2003: 16).

(‘Life Can Be Lonely’), a *cuplé* song performed by Pincho, which is a lighter character than La Gitana, and therefore better represented by the *cuplé* style.

Both *copla* and *cuplé* present challenges for the jukebox formula because of their self-contained original narratives, especially when the chosen songs have the task of forwarding the story. Despite the existence of some successful jukebox musicals like *Mamma Mia!* (1999) and *Jersey Boys* (2004), many other jukebox musicals are known to be flops<sup>176</sup> because of the failure to effectively integrate songs into a strong narrative, although frequently critical ‘flops’ don’t determine commercial success. David Savran argues that the success of the jukebox relies on the power of nostalgia, stating that there is a ‘narcissistic gratification in the process of making your own past a part of the performance’ (2011: 248). In more practical terms, Woolford, argues that the best jukebox musicals are successful for three reasons:

1) The book is genuinely original, witty or inventive, 2) The songwriters of the band were writing more complex and interesting songs than the norm, 3) It is not possible to see the original band perform live. This final reason is key to a producer’s thinking (Woolford 2013: 229).

*The Copla Musical* in principle meets Woolford’s requirements: I’d like to think that the book is original and inventive, *copla* songs are more complex and theatrically interesting than the average pop song as they carry intricate storytelling, and it is certainly difficult to see *copla* live nowadays. However, the lack of popular knowledge of *copla* songs beyond Spain renders these songs unsuitable in bringing nostalgic or personal associations to the listener. Thus, while it is relatively easy to connect to audiences through the performance of *copla* in Spain,<sup>177</sup> this does not work as easily outside Spanish borders as there is scant knowledge of these songs. Therefore, it becomes essential that *The Copla Musical* adheres to the principles of book musical writing to defend its own value without the added help of popular pre-released songs. In the previous section, I have shown how the show adheres to the dramaturgical principles and structures of the book musical. In this section, I will analyse the musical aspects that apply to the book musical in order to explore the suitability and adaptability of the *copla* songs in use in *The Copla Musical*.

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<sup>176</sup> That is the case of musicals ‘shoehorning the songs of The Beach Boys, Rod Stewart, Blondie and Elvis into generally witless books. It is easy to see the attraction for the producer: if the audience go in humming the songs, they will come out humming the songs. The songs are less important to the drama and more important to the marketing. If that band can sell a million records, there are a million people out there who might buy a ticket’ (Woolford 299).

<sup>177</sup> There are actually several examples of Spanish jukebox musicals doing this, such as *Por los ojos de Raquel Meller* (‘Through Raquel Meller’s Eyes’, 2007), *Enamorados anónimos* (‘Anonymous Lovers’, 2009) or the recent *Miguel de Molina al desnudo* (‘Miguel de Molina Bare’, 2016).

### 3.1.2.2. Song classifications

As we saw earlier in the dramaturgical principles, songs in book musicals cover specific dramatic functions in the general structure of a libretto: for example, an 'opening number' has the task of introducing status quo whereas a 'finale' must bring resolution. But songs can also be classified according to their nature (e.g. character songs), their content (e.g. exposition songs) or their function (e.g. comment songs). In his essay, *The Dramatic Function of Songs in Musical Theatre*, scholar Larry Brown establishes a classification of songs according to their nature and their function within a book musical. I will now apply this classification to *The Copla Musical*, and analyse how its songs respond to these features. For clarity, the list below indicates the songs in the show including their original Spanish title, their English name and the character/s that perform them.

#### Act 1

- \* *Carceleras del puerto* ('Jailer of the Port'): La Gitana
- \* *Don Triquitraque* ('Señor Firecraker'): El Americano and Ensemble
- \* *Tatuaje* ('Tattoo'): La Gitana and El Americano (and The Republicans)
- \* *Himno Republicano* ('Republican Anthem'): Ensemble
- \* *Me debes un beso* ('You Owe Me a Kiss'): La Gitana, El Americano, Dolores, Jacinto
- \* *Campanera* ('Campanera'): Gitana, Dolores, Jacinto and Campanera
- \* *Dime que me quieres* ('Tell Me That You Love Me'): El Americano and La Gitana
- \* *Adios España* ('Farewell Spain'): La Gitana, Campanera and Ensemble

#### Act 2

- \* *Las tardes del Ritz* ('The Ritz Afternoons'): La Gitana and Mother
- \* *Sola en la vida* ('Life Can Be Lonely'): Pincho
- \* *Y sin embargo te quiero* ('But I Love You Anyway'): La Gitana
- \* *Te lo juro yo* ('This I Swear to You'): El Americano and La Gitana
- \* *María de la O* ('María de la O'): Campanera and Ensemble
- \* *La bien pagá* ('The Fairly Paid'): El Americano
- \* *Suspiros de España* ('Sighs of Spain'): Campanera, La Gitana and Mother
- \* *Ay pena penita pena* ('Sorrow'): La Gitana and Ensemble

#### A) Character songs

Character songs deal with the characters' expression of thought and desires. These songs are used in specific dramatic situations and are not fully appreciated if taken out of context. Director Bob Fosse (*Pippin*, *Chicago*) described character songs as 'I am' or 'I want' numbers depending on how they function in the show (Brown 2007). 'I am' songs describe a present state, they allow the character to introduce themselves or to

express how s/he feels.<sup>178</sup> *Copla* songs are, by nature, solo songs, whose dramatic function in a book musical is mainly character development, as they relate to the character's experience: he or she expresses his/her feelings or tells a story close to him/her. There are very few original *copla* duets, let alone ensemble pieces. While this proves challenging in the adaptation to write a book musical, it also emphasizes the idea of character, as most of the songs taking part could be or have functions of musical theatre character songs. This being said, there are however several duets in *The Copla Musical* ('You Owe Me a Kiss', 'This I Swear to You', 'Tell Me That You Love Me') or even trios ('Campanera', 'Sighs of Spain') that still meet the requirements of character songs, even if narrated in the third person or in conversation. A traditional example of an 'I am' song in *The Copla Musical* though would be 'Señor Firecracker'. This is the second song in the show and is used by El Americano to describe who he is and what he does for a living. Alternatively, 'I want' songs express the character's wishes and suggest a course of action for the future.<sup>179</sup> An example of an 'I want' song in *The Copla Musical* would be the opening number, 'Jailer of the Port', which reveals the tragic situation of La Gitana as she expresses her longing for freedom. The audience meets the hero for the first time, and she exposes her emotional state, her desires and objectives, as well as her status quo.

In musicals, character is revealed through songs that probe the character's psyche, and through confrontations within the dialogue of the scenes. Dramatic development in musicals is habitually shorter than that of conventional plays, hence the need for an immediate definition of the character's attitude and point of view.<sup>180</sup> Musical theatre encourages simple versus complex characters. Simple characters in a musical feel solid because they are complemented by the music: song and dance make them alive in performance, but this doesn't mean that the characters can't grow without them.<sup>181</sup> Musical are quite Shakespearean in the sense that the characters are clearly defined when we first see them. Audiences must identify with the main character, and spending time with the character is not enough; audiences must be actually involved in their journey. *The Copla Musical's* lead character La Gitana drives the plot throughout

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<sup>178</sup> Examples include 'I am I, Don Quixote' in *Man of La Mancha* (1965), or 'I Feel Pretty' in *West Side Story* (1957).

<sup>179</sup> 'I want' songs tend to be essentially about character exposition, letting the audience know what the character wants so that the desire can fire the plot. These do not need to develop a situation, but let the audience know about the character. There are other songs that develop character and, often along with it, plot. The character begins to sing, and by the end of the song has realised something about how they feel, or what they must do' (Woolford 2013: 312). Well-known examples are 'If I Were a Rich Man' in *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), 'Wouldn't It Be Lovely?' in *My Fair Lady* (1956).

<sup>180</sup> This conventionally happens musically through the 'I am' song.

<sup>181</sup> Music can also interfere (vocally and orchestrally) with the clear comprehension of a character complex enough to require shifting explanation.

and the audience follows her journey. In contrast to more traditional book musical structures, La Gitana's character is not immediately defined but develops as the show unravels. She doesn't sing a presentation (I am) song as such, but her circumstances and dramatic point of view are revealed through her interactions with other characters in the following scenes and songs.

Reprises are sometimes used to reveal how a character has developed during the story since the last time the song was sung. In *The Copla Musical* there are a few reprises that show character development. In Act 1, 'Tattoo' is reprised to expose the love affair of La Gitana and El Americano. The first time we hear this song, the characters are apart in their own social contexts exposing their dreams and personal circumstances. The next time we hear it, they come together materialising those dreams to each other. In Act 2, Pincho and La Gitana reprise 'Life Can Be Lonely', previously performed by Pincho alone as part of her cabaret act. The reprise is used to show La Gitana's development into show-business through Pincho's mentorship.

Finally, climatic songs are exuberant, celebratory, and infectious; they allow the audience to share the characters' passion and excitement. They are used when characters reach a point in the drama where they can't help but explode with feelings of love or success or simple joy of life, and music serves to amplify these emotions to a level above words (Brown 2007). The main example in *The Copla Musical* is 'But I Love You Anyway', the cathartic song La Gitana performs in Carnegie Hall. In this song, the heartbroken La Gitana realises through her song that she needs to leave El Americano to be able to move on with her life. The lyrics of the song alone 'But I Love You Anyway' do not communicate this idea, but the actor's interpretation in the context of the scene helps understanding the action. There are some other examples of emotional songs in *The Copla Musical*, since *copla* was a genre that appealed to the expression of emotions. A few examples include: 'Tell Me That You Love Me', 'This I Swear to You' and 'Sorrow'.

## **B) Songs with Narrative Functions**

Brown makes another classification of songs that depends on the narratives they tell. 'Exposition' songs inform the audience about what has happened in the story prior to the dramatic moment of performance, and what has brought the characters to this point in the action; they may also preview some of the themes of the play (Brown 2007).<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> 'Tradition' in *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), 'The Ballad of Sweeney Todd' in *Sweeney Todd* (1979), or *Ragtime*'s opening number (1998) are a few examples.

These songs are used to quickly establish the dramatic situation, to introduce the main characters, and to give audiences a reason to care for them. Because of the nature of these songs, they are difficult to find in jukebox musicals, as they need to be written explicitly for the narrative. Therefore, there are no true exposition songs in *The Copla Musical*. Some *copla* songs with a strong narrative content could meet the descriptors of an exposition song, however they are not used as such: 'Tattoo' involves intricate storytelling, however rather than as a prologue, it is used to describe events occurring outside the stage, what is known in musical theatre as 'Narration song'. The story sung by La Gitana and El Americano provides information about what happened to both characters outside what the audience see on stage and over an extended period, so the song would work as both 'narration' and 'exposition'.

Other than these, there are also 'conflict' songs, that expose a character's struggle to attain differing goals. In *The Copla Musical*, 'María de la O' would be the best example, as in this number sung by Campanera, La Gitana is confronted as a way for her to understand her current situation and thus make a resolution. Finally, 'summary' songs compress lengthy amounts of time into one number (Brown 2007).<sup>183</sup> In *The Copla Musical*, 'The Ritz Afternoons' covers the longest time period in the show, which is La Gitana's rise to stardom throughout her first few years in New York. 'Tattoo' also covers a long period of quest and the reencounter between La Gitana and El Americano. However, here there is a difference between action and information. One of the main rules in theatre, but particularly applicable to musicals is 'show, don't tell'. The audience must discover and interpret actions so they become actively engaged and have a part to play. If the audience only receives announcements, they will not feel involved in the action and risk disengagement. Characters must assume conflicts and objectives; the high stakes must be as personal and pressured as possible and characters need to address their dramatic problem: lamenting only stops the action. Therefore, in addition to telling the story and providing key information, narrative songs also need to leave a space for the audience to fill the emotional gap. That space suggests the avoidance of any additional information that can be easily deduced, or the repetition of emotional patterns already established within the narrative.

The eleven o'clock number is a theatrical term for a big, show-stopping song that occurs towards the end of a two-act musical but is not the final number in the show. It often signifies a moment of revelation or change in heart of a lead character, although there are exceptions to this. It is often concerned with the Hero making the

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<sup>183</sup> For instance, 'Good Night and Thank You' describes *Evita*'s rise from small town girl to prominent society figure (1976).

final decision that will return his/her life to a form of stability.<sup>184</sup> In *The Copla Musical*, the eleven o'clock number is 'Sighs of Spain', an emotional number in which La Gitana, in the company of her mother and the spirit of Campanera, sings about her sense of belonging to her homeland while she sails back to Spain to face her past. If we analysed Act 2 of *The Copla Musical* as an independent one-hour show, the epilogue where La Gitana is back in Spain would not be included in this version, as the audience would not have met the characters from Act 1 that populate this final scene, plus the scene of the return to Spain already gives a sense of closure. The eleven o'clock number would then be 'The Fairly Paid', which presents the final confrontation between La Gitana and El Americano, and 'Sighs of Spain' would take the role of a finale.

Comedy songs also merit discussion. Indeed comedy and romance often feature as combined features in the creation of musical theatre. Comedy often results naturally from situation rather than gags. Charm, naiveté and sincerity lead to comedy coming from character and situation, sometimes in the form of a song. There are no gags in *The Copla Musical*: instead, rather unusual situations provoke comedy. Comic characters mainly populate Act 2 (Pincho, Mother), although there are some comic situations in both acts. Songs performed by Pincho ('Life Can Be Lonely') and the mother ('The Ritz Afternoons') display comedic undertones. Even though the main themes are of a serious nature, there still are opportunities across the piece for comedy, for instance in the political opposition of Nationalists and Republicans. Romance comes from opposition of ideas and goals, and within this opposition there are also opportunities for comedy. Leads therefore also provide moments of comedy in song, for instance the duet between La Gitana and El Americano in their flirtatious song 'You Owe Me a Kiss'.

Finally, other categories of songs would include: 'comment' songs, in which a character steps outside the drama and sings about the events on stage (like Che in *Evita*), musical metaphors that portray a situation in a presentational, non-literal fashion;<sup>185</sup> and cameo songs that feature a minor character in a memorable number (Brown 2007). In *The Copla Musical*, the song 'María de la O' would be the closest approximation to these three categories. Campanera appears in a cameo part in Act 2, as a musical metaphor, in a non-realistic setting (a dream), to comment on La Gitana's situation and to offer guidance to help her find a resolution.

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<sup>184</sup> Some 11 o'clock numbers include 'Sit Down, You're Rocking the Boat' from *Guys and Dolls* (1950), 'Get Me to the Church on Time' from *My Fair Lady* (1956), and 'Rose's Turn' from *Gypsy* (1959).

<sup>185</sup> In 'We Both Reached for the Gun' from *Chicago* (1975), the defence attorney manipulates the witness and the press like marionettes on strings.

### C) Diegetic songs and musical style

The term diegetic refers to the context of a musical number in a work's theatrical narrative. Diegetic music comes from a real source and/or implies an awareness. The word 'diegesis' comes from the Greek 'to guide' or 'to lead' and it refers to 'the telling of the story', most particularly to moments in a musical or play where the characters are self-consciously performing (Symonds and Taylor 2014: 20),<sup>186</sup> whereas in non-diegetic songs characters are not aware that they are singing and the music is external to the narrative. As Taylor, puts it, 'suspension of disbelief allows that audiences 'don't see' and 'don't hear' the orchestra in the pit during non-diegetic songs' (2012: 111).<sup>187</sup> Many musicals mix diegetic and non-diegetic songs,<sup>188</sup> and so does *The Copla Musical*. For example, the song La Gitana sings at Carnegie Hall ('But I Love You Anyway') is diegetic whereas the 'Campanera' song in Act 1 is non-diegetic: the rationale is that the Republicans are talking about Campanera, dialoguing at a high level with music, and the audience perceives that as song. We need to find strong dramatic reasons to justify characters spontaneously bursting into song. Plot and character develop through song and dance, but coherence must be found in the way *copla* songs are performed, given their intrinsic presentational nature.

*The Copla Musical* explores the emotions of the original *copla* songs. Woolford critiques the cliché that 'characters sing when the emotional pitch reaches a level at which speaking is no longer appropriate, and they dance when the emotional pitch reaches that at which singing is no longer appropriate' (2013: 306). He argues that the reasons why characters sing are actually defined by the theatrical language the writer is using.<sup>189</sup> The theatrical language is also somehow influenced by the musical style.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Such as Sally Bowles' performances in the Kit Kat Klub of *Cabaret* (1966), or Maria von Trapp teaching the children to sing with 'Do-Re-Mi' in *The Sound of Music* (1959). In the jukebox musical *Piaf* (1978), the songs are diegetic, because the numbers are sung on Edith's stage and the drama happens outside the stage. In *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (2006) there is diegetic lip-synching combined with emotional 'own' singing (Taylor 2012).

<sup>187</sup> As with the nuns' song 'How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?' in *The Sound of Music* (1959).

<sup>188</sup> In *Carousel* (1945), for example, 'If I Loved You' and 'Soliloquy' are non-diegetic, but 'You'll Never Walk Alone' and 'That Was a Real Nice Clambake' are diegetic because the characters are aware that they are singing them. It is rare to find a musical that is entirely non-diegetic, although *Sunset Boulevard* is one (if the characters are not aware that they are singing at the New Year's scene). It is equally rare to find a musical where all the songs are diegetic, although this is exactly the decision that Bob Fosse made when adapting *Cabaret* for cinema. The stage musical mixed diegetic and non-diegetic songs, the film has only diegetic songs (Woolford 2013: 92). In *Cabaret* the diegetic songs, sung on stage (at the Kit Kat Club) comment on the actions happening in the drama.

<sup>189</sup> Woolford notes that 'characters can sing only the most rapturous emotions, or the most mundane banalities, but as long as it is consistent with the theatrical language of the piece, then the audience will accept it' (306).

<sup>190</sup> Musical styles include rock, pop, jazz, classic musical theatre, operatic, rap... 'There are as many different styles in musical theatre as there are in music, from the operetta of *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) to the rap of *In the Heights* (2007)' (Woolford 231).

In *The Copla Musical*, the style is clearly influenced by the *copla* features defined earlier in the thesis: Spanish ornamentation, self-contained narratives, hyper-emotions, etc. In that sense, *copla* songs helped defining the setting and the theatrical language of the show, as these early 20<sup>th</sup> century Spanish features influence the way characters speak and sing.<sup>191</sup> But this is also another reason why *cuplé* can offer a bit of leeway in terms of musical style, specifically at the opening of Act 2, where I aim to bring the audience back and make them settle in the new context of 1940s America. Act 2's opening number, 'The Ritz Afternoons', is a *cuplé* song, lighter and less grounded in Spanish tradition and values than *copla*. The use of this genre at this moment in the narrative allows me to reflect on the metaphor of La Gitana going to America by letting the songs become a bit more Anglicized, contaminated with some Anglo-Saxon influences such as jazz. These influences are also present in the underscoring.

Music under spoken scenes, or what is termed 'underscore', is another way in which the music can deepen the theatrical experience, as the speech is heightened because of the presence of musical accompaniment and the musical continuity often helps transitioning into songs (Taylor 2012: 64). A convention in musical theatre is that music expands and consequently dialogue must condense: in *The Copla Musical*, we only have the possibility of expanding the music of *copla* songs through underscoring scenes since the songs, as self-contained narratives, have a determined duration that is unavoidable. Conflict, high stakes and strong emotion provide thrust and pace: the audience must care about the characters all the time. *Copla* songs raise the stakes and underline the drama, however their performances become dramatic time and even though they play an important part in recreating an atmosphere for the piece, the dialogue must be carefully constructed around them, and in tune with the song's contents. Some musicals<sup>192</sup> have an almost continuous musical score under the spoken scenes, which is used to heighten emotions.

Here is an example of how a *copla* song becomes a music number integrated in the narrative of the piece: *La bien pagá* is a *copla* song that originally narrates the abandonment of a prostitute by her client, who reproaches that he has paid generously for her love. In *The Copla Musical* this becomes 'The Fairly Paid', a musical number towards the end of Act 2 about El Americano's abandonment of La Gitana. The context is slightly different but the lyrics still apply to the situation of neglect, seen as part of an economic transaction. The audience has followed the journey of the characters' relationship throughout the narrative, and at this moment must witness and understand

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<sup>191</sup> For example, melismatic, often vernacular and overly emotional (more in Chapter 1.2.2).

<sup>192</sup> Such as *Ragtime* (1990) and *Show Boat* (1927).

this abandonment. As the author, I need to provide the narrative details that the original lyrics do not specify, so I write a scene around the musical number, while I use an extended introduction of the song to help musically in increasing the anticipation of the character's decision. The dialogue is kept to a minimum to allow the audience to interpret the scene mainly through the song. This approach to structuring the relationship between the scenes and the songs is recurrent in *The Copla Musical*. The emotion is heightened by music, and characters do not need long speeches to be understood. By condensing dialogue, I aim to match the pace in the script with the natural tempo of the songs.

Musical style not only affects musical features but also thematic features that interplay with some conventions of the book musical such as 'romance'. Therefore, the characters will experience a type of romance culturally influenced by the *copla* lyrics. The romance between La Gitana and El Americano promotes narrative growth and character development. However, *copla* songs traditionally stereotyped love affairs by imposing melodramatic endings to the characters' difficult circumstances, so this flare of melodrama needed to be contained within the development of this piece. For example, the opening number of Act 1 'Jailer of the Port' is originally a lament where the singer expresses his misery in a prison, so I intentionally used this song to establish the status quo for the main character at the start of the show.

Finally, musical style might also be a strong influence on the physical style of the show. Woolford emphasizes the importance of the physical language that the cast will use and the function of dance in the piece (2013: 232). In the initial workshops of this musical, the cast included an ensemble that developed a stylised flamenco-influenced physical language. This language appeared not only in musical numbers but also helped emphasize some dramatic moments. For logistical reasons, the ensemble was not sustainable in the following years of the development of the piece, but it would be a definite feature to bring back if the budget allowed it. The physical style during the piece's development in 2012 and 2013 responded mainly to a naturalistic impulse that aimed to portray as historically accurately as possible the hardships of the Spanish Civil War and the contrasting 'easier' life in America. Songs tried to respond as well to this idea of naturalism and were performed with an intention of verisimilitude, trying to justify at all moments the reasons why the characters would burst into song. A useful tool to understand and perform *copla* songs within the show was to consider what singing means in Spanish culture, especially in the historical context of the piece, a

time in which singing was a strong way of communicating.<sup>193</sup> There were, however, some oneiric moments in the show, such as the ‘dream sequence’ in which stylised patterns were used, such as a movement sequence in which characters interacted in a non-realistic manner offering La Gitana diverse points of view about her future in America and Spain. This dream sequence climaxes with the *copla* song ‘Maria de la O’ led by character Campanera and counterpointed by La Gitana’s Mother, Pincho, and El Americano. *The Copla Musical* is conceived for fringe theatre spaces and has always been performed acoustically, with no amplification for singers or the band, which is habitually made up of three instruments (piano, violin and guitar). The non-amplification creates a more intimate atmosphere and helps the audience care about the characters and their fate.

### 3.2.2.3 Music and lyrical concerns

For Woolford, there are two rules to help effective lyric writing, one is melodic and one is rhythmic: ‘songwriters set words to music and in musical theatre it is important that the words can be understood by the audience in one listening, in the context of the play’ (2013: 372). In Chapter 2, we discussed a few examples of rhyme and rhythm scansion in the translation of *copla* songs, by which stresses falling oddly in the English words risked sounding erroneous.<sup>194</sup> But this sensation of oddity can be also produced for grammatical, metric or semantic reasons. Oddities of this sort are subject to be made when the lyric translator is not native to the language s/he is writing. What sounds acceptable to a Spanish ear might sound strange to an Anglo-speaker. Hence, in this process of transforming original *copla* songs into musical numbers in *The Copla Musical*, I collaborated with a British lyricist. I undertook the dramaturgical craft of creating a first adaptation from the original *copla* song, trying to preserve the meaning in coherence within the new narrative, and then worked in dialogue with the British lyricist with the aim of eliminating oddities and enhancing the lyric poetry and dramatic understanding in the new language. This process involved alterations in the grammatical construction of sentences, the setting of metrics to music and the redefinition of some semantical constructs. In this section I will look at some examples.

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<sup>193</sup> Music theatre genres such as Zarzuela and *revista* constantly portrayed people finding music in common situations: clapping in the streets, dancing *zapateado* (stamping). This replicates popular entertainments such as *fiestas populares*, where people express their emotions through song and dance.

<sup>194</sup> Woolford also illustrates this idea with the word ‘somewhere’ in the song ‘Over the Rainbow’: ‘the ‘some’ is stressed more than the ‘where’. Both Bernstein and Arlen set the syllable ‘some’ on the stronger musical beat; if they did not, the word would sound odd. It would be stressed wrongly, and it would sound to the listener like a song writing ‘spelling mistake’; they can understand you but they will feel your error’ (2013: 373).

## A) Grammatical constructions

The **grammar** of a language affects its sentence construction: Spanish sentences might be built in any order (e.g. Direct/indirect objects, verbs and complements may be easily placed in sentences before or after the subject), whereas English sentences normally follow a pattern of sentence construction (subject + verb + predicate). This rule is not fixed and lyricist and poets can play with the construction of their sentences, but I have confirmed that a grammatical order of sentences helps clarity and understanding. This affects the translation of song and demands special care when placing the stresses in verses, especially if we want the melody to serve the expressive nature of the words, while respecting the original affectation of the beats.

Below is an example from the adaptation of the song *Tatuaje* ('Tattoo'). In the table, we can see the Spanish original and two English translations that respond to the first and final version of a re-writing process. This process consisted of several stages, but by comparing here first and last, the differences in lyric adaptation are most notable. The first version attempts to provide lyrics that are a faithful translation in terms of replicating meaning and metrics. Accuracy is sometimes sacrificed for the 'sing-ability' of the song in the new language. In the final version, metrics have been respected but words have been changed. Sometimes these alterations are of a semantic nature. In the example below, we focus on the verbal constructs of the English dramatic adaptation:

SPANISH ORIGINAL	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	DRAMATIC ADAPTATION
25. Errante lo busco por todos los puertos,	25. Wandering I'm searching for him at the ports	25. <b>Since then</b> I've been <b>searching</b> and <b>wandering</b> the ports
26. a los marineros pregunto por él,	26. And to other sailors I ask about him	26. And <b>I ask</b> the sailors <b>if they know of him</b>
27. y nadie me dice, si está vivo o muerto	27. But nobody tells me if he is alive or dead	27. Nobody <b>can tell me</b> if <b>he's</b> alive or dead
28. y sigo en mi duda buscándolo fiel.	28. And I keep on wandering, looking out for him.	28. And I keep on <b>searching</b> , looking out for him.

As illustrated in the last column in the table, the lyrics have experienced the following grammatical changes, noted in **bold**:

- In verse 25, 'searching' and 'wandering' are now found at the end of the phrase.<sup>195</sup> From its literal translation to its final construction, 'wandering' stops being an

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<sup>195</sup> Inversions happen when 'words are moved around their natural sentence order to create rhyme or to fit an existing scansion pattern. (...) The trick of lyric writing is to be able to make the rhyme, the scansion and the sense all come together in one perfect moment' (Woolford 348).

epithet to become a conjugated verb: this makes sense in English because it can be used both as an adjective and a verb, and still refer to the same subject. 'Since then' insists on a temporal reference, and the tense of the sentence changes from present continuous to present perfect continuous (the time refers to the moment El Americano left).

- In verse 26, the sentence construction is changed to become more readable in English: the new construction 'Subject +verb +Indirect object +Direct object', replaces the Spanish original structure: 'Indirect object +(omitted subject) +verb +Direct object'. The new English order leaves room to articulate 'Ask if they know of him' instead of 'Ask about him'.

- In verse 27, I suppressed the conjunction 'but', which I originally included to avoid the redundancy of the conjunction 'and'. This makes room to articulate 'Nobody can tell me', which reads better than 'nobody tells me', despite the latter being a more accurate translation. Also, to avoid confusion, I decided to add subject and verb (he's) to the next beat even if that meant exceeding the exact number of syllables in the melody to keep the original accentuation, creating a slightly longer verse to facilitate the English grammatical structure.

- Finally, in verse 28, the verb 'wandering' is replaced with 'searching' which responds to the activity carried out by the singer throughout the previous verses. The grammatical tense is here maintained and this is only a semantic alteration.

## **B) Metrics and Semantics**

In Chapter 2, I covered some technicalities of the use of rhyme in English and Spanish, followed by some examples in the adaptation of *copla* songs. In musicals, lyrics must be able to carry drama, for which rhymes and scansion must be at their best, to help the audience understand the sense amid the drama (Woolford 2013: 326). This, however, has semantic implications as terms need to be modified to preserve rhyme and scansion in the new language. Spanish language is baroque by nature and it normally requires longer articulations than English, so in the translations of songs I frequently take the poetic license to add adjectives and modify constructions slightly to fill in musical gaps left in melodies. However, the opposite can happen too. I will refer to the previous example of 'Tattoo'. In verse 27, because of prosody, there is a silent section at the end of the English version. Not even the addition of an extra 'he's' can redress this anomaly, which is, on the other hand, exceptional in the bigger scheme of the songs' adaptation.

Spanish: Y-na-die-me-DI-ce (6) sies-ta-vi-voo-MUER-to (6)

English: No-bo-dy-can-TELL-me (6) if-he's-a-live-or-DEAD-(extra silent bit) (7)

En su voz a - mar - ga \_\_\_\_\_ ha - bía la tris - te - za, \_\_\_\_\_  
 y na - die me di - ce \_\_\_\_\_ si es - tá vi - vo o muer - to \_\_\_\_\_

Below there is another table with further examples illustrating semantical changes affected by the metrics also in song 'Tattoo':

SPANISH ORIGINAL	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	DRAMATIC ADAPTATION
6. Su pecho tatuado con un corazón (11 syllables)	6. His chest was tattooed with a heart (9)	6. His chest was tattooed with a <b>broken</b> heart (11)
8. Doliente y cansada/ del acordeón	8. Hurting and tired as the accordion	8. Tart as the accordion /aching, painful, <b>tired</b>
20. Con este nombre de mujer (8 syllables)	20. With this woman's name (5 syllables)	20. With this <b>mysterious</b> woman's name (8)
28. Y sigo en mi duda, buscándolo fiel	28. And I keep on wondering, looking out for him	28. And I keep on <b>searching</b> , looking out for him

- In verse 6: the addition of the epithet 'broken' to fit the metrics is anticipating the melodrama, for the audience still does not know at this point of the song that the heart has been broken.

- In verse 8, there is a change of order of the first and second parts of the verse (Tart as the accordion /aching, painful, tired). The literal translation of the original Spanish lyrics reads 'painful and tired as the accordion'. This verse is well-remembered in the Spanish tradition for emphasizing strongly the word *acordeón* at the end of the verse. However, since the accentuation of the music at the end of this phrase is so strong, I decided to emphasize the description of the emotional state of the singer instead of the instrument she is comparing her voice to. Thus, the stress of the line lies now in 'tired' instead of 'accordion', which also facilitates the rhyme from a previous verse. In this verse too, I have translated the word *doliente* as 'aching and painful' since there is room to use more than one word: the two words help describe the emotional state of the singer and create a comparison that grows in intensity 'from

aching to painful and finally tired'. Finally, the word 'tart' was added to fit the metrics of the verse, plus adjoins another quality to the full comparison of voice and accordion.

- In verse 20: likewise, 'mysterious' is an addition to the original lyric which influences La Gitana's character, as now El Americano is describing her as mysterious.

- In verse 28, I substituted 'wandering' for 'searching' to create an alliteration (searching, looking out) that would emphasize the dramatic situation of La Gitana. I made a semantic repetition of the verb 'to search' that I had already used in verse 25, in order to insist on this idea of quest.

The adaptation of songs also opens the possibilities for establishing a series of semantic signifiers. In the opening number of *Oklahoma!* we learn who the protagonist (Curly) is, how he feels and potentially what he desires through the performance of an apparently innocuous song, 'Oh, What a Beautiful Morning'. Similarly, when adapting *The Copla Musical's* opening number 'Jailer of the Port', a whole set of semantic relations and useful imagery to the story's narrative comes to life, such as the lonely and despairing situation of La Gitana watching the ships arrive and leave the port of Santa María. While working on the adaptation, I tried to mirror some of the dramatic principles of book musicals by attempting to describe a status quo that would give a narrative function to this song: in the first verse, La Gitana describes her situation and emotional state. She introduces the idea of 'watching the ships sail' as a metaphor of being disconnected from the world in her captivity. In the second verse, the Nationalist soldiers are introduced first as antagonists in the story, responsible for the protagonist's lack of freedom. There is also a note of the political disaster arising ('the world colliding, the land dividing') as metaphor for the Spanish Civil War and the ideological division of Spain. During the bridge of the song, I connected the image of the sailing ships with an idea of hope: specifically, La Gitana imagines the ship is sailing to America, a symbol for freedom: America seen as land of opportunity. Finally, during the chorus, La Gitana continues developing the idea of 'sailing ships' as the original song does, but differently to the original she finishes the song by reminding herself of her captivity and her lack of hope, which brings the audience back to the present situation and allows the action to proceed from that point.

In the next section, I will analyse the transformation of *The Copla Musical* into *The Copla Solo*, a reduced version of the show that has benefited from international exposure. The Solo features a new dramaturgy that brings into play the role of *copla* in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, leading to important matters of queer representation that have become intrinsic to the form.

### 3.2. SECOND ITERATION: THE SOLO (2014-17)<sup>196</sup>

The book musical version of *The Copla Musical* was developed between 2011 and 2013. During this time, it was first presented in the Collisions Festival and further work-in-progress opportunities at the Roundhouse and Hoxton Hall. Despite strenuous efforts and initiatives to fundraise, the scope of the project was too big to gather enough financial backing and it was conditioned by very limited resources. The participating artists committed to this project voluntarily, facilitating their time and talent, but inevitably imposing restrictions of availability that affected practical decisions. An important factor of creating a new musical is, according to Wolford, its 'produceability'. He discusses the elements of produceability that are key to the success of the project: 'Subject Matter, Originality and Quality, Scale and Cast Size, Casting, Good Times and Audience Profile' (2013: 94). These elements apply to the creation of many musicals, although there are also many others developed without complying with all these. Equally, *The Copla Musical* meets some of these elements: I would like to think that subject matter, originality and quality, for instance, are reasonably well established. However, some factors such as casting star names were not possible.<sup>197</sup> The show could not either guarantee an audience which is familiar with the *copla* genre. This project had some limitations from the start that needed to be dealt with to secure its survival. This is when the idea of making a 'solo' version of the show came to mind. Transforming the show into a solo piece did reduce production costs, and made the show transferable to other venues and international festivals that have allowed an international development of the project.<sup>198</sup>

In the 2014 edition of the Collisions Festival, I explored a rewrite of the musical attending to a new dramaturgy that would combine the story of La Gitana, in parallel with a contemporary narrator. The narrator figure allows for a historical contextualization of the character of La Gitana while providing a current perspective and commentary to issues of gender and queer narratives. These are aspects that are crucial to the historical development of *copla*, and I had pointed them out in the previous iteration of the show but not explored them in depth. *The Copla Solo* thus became a one-hour piece in which one actor plays both the parts of the narrator and La Gitana. The marketing description of the show reads as follows: 'In contemporary London, a Spanish immigrant sets out on a journey of self-acceptance, inspired by the remarkable story of drag artist La Gitana who escaped from Franco's dictatorship to

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<sup>196</sup> For reference, the Rosemary Branch Theatre presentation, 2016: [https://youtu.be/Y92I\\_GOLHDM](https://youtu.be/Y92I_GOLHDM)

<sup>197</sup> This is common to many musicals in their development phases. A few current examples would include *In the Heights* (2007), *The Book of Mormon* (2011) and *Everybody is Talking About Jamie* (2017).

<sup>198</sup> The international projection of this project will be discussed as part of the conclusions.

perform her passion-filled Spanish folk music in America. Through the passion and subversion of Spanish *copla*, La Gitana will eventually transform his life and understand what it takes to come to terms with who you are born to be'.

In his study of musicals as work-in-progress, *Unfinished Show Business* (2005), Bruce Kirle indicated that musical theatre works are constantly reinvented as products of their socio-cultural moments:

We must then consider the material conditions in which the text is created, mounted and received: that is, the historical moment of production, which informs the ways in which audiences are inclined to receive the work; and the impact that the complex and collaborative process of staging a musical has on the text (75).

The re-writing of *The Copla Musical* as a solo show involved a new dramatic adaptation where queer theory threw some light over the gender identification issues that have informed the development of *copla* from its origin to this day. The other objectives at the core of the creation of the show remained the same: to produce a musical that re-imagines and expands *copla* outside of Spanish boundaries, only that this version follows a different (smaller) format. As Woolford notes, the creation of every musical is commonly preceded by a series of workshops, which have now become a key stage in the development of a new musical and it is rare for a major musical to reach the West End or Broadway without one (2013: 402).<sup>199</sup> It is still to be seen what is the best or most efficient format to bring *copla* songs into an international theatre scene, but the opportunity provided by *Collisions* to test the transformation of *The Copla Musical* into its solo version confirmed that the show resonated significantly with contemporary audiences concerned with ideas of cultural and gender identities.

A final word about format before moving onto a queer analysis of the Solo version. Producers and industry professionals have on occasion questioned the description of *The Copla Solo* as a musical. Some have described it rather as a play with songs, and although this description is valid, I would like to offer some clarification. Woolford offers a classification of the formats of musicals responding to some descriptors (2013: 36-42). Although I believe there is no need to assign a fixed format to every show, since their defining features are often changeable and musicals can fit

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<sup>199</sup> 'Workshops began in the 1970s when the economics of Broadway began to prohibit lengthy periods in out-of-town tryouts when the show could be rewritten and fine-tuned. (...) The reason for a workshop is that musicals only really come to life when performed by a cast for an audience, and this is the first time that the writers will truly have a chance to see what the show is like, and crucially how an audience responds to it' (Woolford 402).

more than one format, I have identified the following selection as suitable formats that fit *The Copla Solo*, which also inherits features from the book and jukebox musical formats from its preceding source *The Copla Musical*:

- The Play with Songs is a play that uses songs as part of the storytelling (for instance, Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage* or many of Shakespeare's works, where lyrics are even part of their script).<sup>200</sup> Differently to the musical, the songs are however not integral to the development of the story, which in many instances is produced without them. *Copla* songs are however integral to the piece, so this definition does not fully represent the project.

- The Chamber Musical is 'a small-scale book musical that does not include an ensemble, normally takes place in only one or two locations and includes little dance' (Woolford 35).<sup>201</sup> *The Copla Solo* could be labelled as such as this description responds to a book musical of a smaller scale.

- The Concept Musical is a musical 'where the concept or theme of the show is more important than the linear story but it is all told through bespoke book, music and lyrics' (Woolford 35).<sup>202</sup> Although plot is important in *The Copla Solo*, it is arguable that *copla* songs are the central concept of this show. It is through these songs that I explore many of the related themes of gender, cultural identity and identification embedded in the show.

### 3.2.1. A Queer analysis

In this section, I will discuss the influence of queer theory on the practice. One of the problems intercultural theatre often faces is how to avoid melodramatic constructions of gender while still accounting for the specificity of sexuality in certain societies.<sup>203</sup>

However, in integrated musicals the text often features one leading character written in an open or incomplete manner:

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<sup>200</sup> 'In the great majority of Shakespeare's plays there is some singing. (...) There is, if nothing more, a scrap of a ballad, or a stage direction for a song in every comedy but the *Comedy of Errors*, and in all the tragedies which are associated with the name of Shakespeare but *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Coriolanus*' (Lathrop 2013).

<sup>201</sup> Some examples of this are *Thrill Me* (2003) and *I Do! I Do!* (1966).

<sup>202</sup> 'This term is applicable to George Furrth and Stephen Sondheim's *Company* (1970), which tells the story in a non-linear fashion; or to *Cats* (1981), largely a revue of character songs in which the production concept is to take the audience into the world of the cats' (Woolford 36).

<sup>203</sup> Peter Brook in *Mahabharata* adapted roles in source texts to archetypes, and was critiqued of stripping the readable signs of culture from the source text (Knowles 2010).

As the star comics of musical comedy commented provocatively on the messiness of American identity, enigmatic characters in the integrated musical similarly draw attention to provocative issues about gender and sexuality (Kirle 2005: 161).

I have shown in Chapters 1 and 2 how homosexual communities adopted *copla* songs as a means of expression, especially in times of dictatorship and repression. *The Copla Musical* uses several concepts from melodrama to build a story, such as a transgender presence within a conservative family and impossible love stories. The character of La Gitana disguises a transgender male-to-female with the apparent nationalist-catholic virtues that cisgender females during Franco's regime attributed to the *copla* genre. As Judith Butler stated, 'Gender is only real to the extent it is performed' (Butler, in Knowles: 2010: 45), and this intercultural reinterpretation demonstrates the potential to bring hidden social identities into being. In *The Copla Solo*, a narrator looks into the character of La Gitana as an inspiration to unlock his own sexuality and gender identity. Through their shared passion for *copla*, the narrator identifies with La Gitana's longing the homeland, her love affairs and her desire for freedom. The songs unify their emotional needs and create a queer narrative journey between both characters.

### 3.2.1.1. Queer influences

Musical theatre has historically appealed to homosexual communities,<sup>204</sup> and in a similar way, *copla* has provided opportunities for gender and sexual identification despite the heteronormative display of its traditional narratives. Wolf asserts that 'the dominance of heterosexuality in the musical is neither natural nor inevitable' (2002: 31). She implies that spectators and 'readers of culture' have the power to denaturalize the politics of the musical by seeing the conventions just as conventions. This is what Wolf, paraphrasing David Van Leer, calls 'queer spectatorial interventions' (ibid).<sup>205</sup> *The Copla Solo* resonates with other major musical theatre works because of its treatment of gender issues. Underground musical *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, made into a film in 1975, celebrated 'difference couched within a "retro" punishment scenario' (Knapp 2010: 208). The postmodern *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (1998; film version,

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<sup>204</sup> As explained in Chapter 2, this is due to the multiple identifications and desires across genders and sexualities that are available in musicals. For more details, see section 2.3.1.

<sup>205</sup> 'David Van Leer shows how the musical, in spite of its mainstream popularity and the attendant conservative gender, sexual, and racial politics of its content, offers possibilities for queer spectatorial interventions' (Wolf 2002: 31).

2001) 'presents its quest for wholeness amid the various fragmentations—of self, of society—that have followed modernity, within both figurative and explicitly sexualized terms' (ibid).<sup>206</sup> The parallels between the two shows and *The Copla Solo* are relevant to queer issues. All of them are, at one point, 'situated in America and feature a non-American, cross-dressing male diva of somewhat ambiguous sexuality who pays a steep price for his/her deviance' (Knapp 2010: 252) and their scores are based on a sort of retro music.<sup>207</sup> In thematic terms, *Hedwig* maps the process of East European liberation onto the body of its title character (Knapp 2010: 254). In a similar manner, *La Gitana* reflects the political situation of the Francoist dictatorship, in tune with the contemporary 21<sup>st</sup>-century setting of political conservatism in Spain. Hansel is, effectively, a transsexual, whereas *La Gitana* is more accurately depicted as a transgender woman, a woman trapped in a male body. Hedwig's sexual identity has become very problematic among transsexuals who

have understandably felt betrayed by Hedwig because it problematizes Hedwig's sexual identity in any number of ways without providing any perspective whatever on how or why someone in a position to choose freely might decide to change her or his gender (Knapp 254).<sup>208</sup>

While *The Copla Solo* has not had the wide distribution of development that *Hedwig* has, I have however learnt from this problematization to make *La Gitana* a character that responds to these concerns. *La Gitana* lives as a woman, however repressed by Spain's conservatism, she is forced to inhabit her male body. In a

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<sup>206</sup> 'In *Hedwig*, the [Berlin] Wall (1961–1989) and the conflicts it symbolizes are embodied within the person of Hedwig Robinson (né Hansel Schmidt), whose sex-change operation has left him/her in both gender and sexual limbo. While *Hedwig* seems to have been intended as a kind of follow-up to *Rocky Horror*, and though its mode of presentation is decidedly unorthodox (a mixture of stand-up comedy and low-budget rock concert), it is also, in the way it interweaves its political and personal themes, a much more conventional musical than *Rocky Horror*' (Knapp 2010: 252).

<sup>207</sup> '*Rocky Horror* draws on 1950s pastiche within a glam-derived protopunk, and *Hedwig* in what might be described as neoglam and postpunk, with a substantial admixture of heavy metal. Indeed, in Hedwig's monologue, the musical influences she cites overlap significantly with Richard O'Brien's, including *Jesus Christ Superstar* (not mentioned in the film version) and those whom *Hedwig* terms "the crypto-homo rockers: Lou Reed . . . Iggy Pop . . . David Bowie"' (ellipses in original)' (Knapp 2010: 252).

<sup>208</sup> 'Thus, most obviously, the "messy operation" is performed on Hansel Schmidt's person, effacing his very identity as part of a process of liberating him politically and sexually. While Hansel acquiesces, by agreeing to the operation and assuming his mother's name as a necessary means for marrying the black American sergeant Luther Robinson, it is equally clear that his choices are closely circumscribed by political realities in East Berlin in the years before the Wall came down. Despite frequent interpretive assumptions to the contrary, there is little in the script (or in productions I've seen, which have in some ways deviated from the script) that confirms that *Hedwig's* Hansel is in fact gay, although he does seem confused regarding his sexual orientation. As Hedwig makes very explicit, Hansel allows himself to be seduced by Sgt. Robinson specifically because of the taste of power that it gives him, and his agreeing to the unsuccessful sex-change operation is not driven by his sense of being a woman trapped within a man's body but by political necessity, since it appears to be the only way that he can use Sgt. Robinson as a ticket to the West' (Knapp 2010: 254).

contemporary setting, this is compared to the sexual orientation of *The Copla Solo*'s narrator: in the UK he lives an openly gay life with his partner because in Spain he does not dare to confront his traditional family, who have inherited the conservative values of Francoist politics. It is through *copla* songs and investigating La Gitana's journey that this narrator will find the strength to confront his own identity. In that sense, Hedwig's depiction of post-Soviet Berlin<sup>209</sup> is comparable to the Francoist Spain La Gitana escapes, or even the democratic Spain the narrator wants to rediscover to free himself from deeply inherited conservative ideals.

La Gitana draws inspiration from the Spanish divas from the folkloric films of the dictatorship years. Spanish cinema during the Francoist dictatorship contributed to create a fake image of Spain in which the *folklóricas* acquired typified gypsy features such as black curly hair (often tied up in a bun with a perfect curl adorning the forehead), dark skin, self-confidence, temper, nerve, but also charm and 'duende'<sup>210</sup> (Hurtado 2003: 29). These features contributed to provide an image of the gypsy race that was associated with Andalusia, but by extension came to symbolize Spain in the international imagination. In *The Copla Solo*, La Gitana represents the subversion of these stereotypes by giving the character a trans-identity. During the dictatorship, the cinema was for many queer individuals the only possibility to see their own sexuality reflected through identification. Times have now changed in terms of visibility and inclusivity, but even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Mira speaks about transvestism becoming a powerful symbol when it goes beyond performance. No-one is scandalized to see a transvestite performing onstage, but 'few gentlemen would dare to come to the office dressed as female' (2004: 151). Even though queer collectives have increased their presence in certain societies and social circles, there is still a long way ahead in terms of visibility and acceptance. It is interesting that Mira mentions this example, as in *The Copla Solo*, the character of the narrator also goes through a personal transformation, influenced by La Gitana's stand, and his personal journey leads him to eventually go to the office dressed as a woman.

Other Spanish characters that have influenced the conception of La Gitana include the protagonist of Rodríguez Méndez's play *Autumn Flower* (1983) Lluïset, also known as 'Flor de Otoño', a gay character in between a cinematic vamp and a *cupletista flamenca*. Real life camp identifications include painter Ocaña, the

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<sup>209</sup> 'The chaotic, postmodern, and soon-to-be post-Soviet world Hansel inhabits, in which promised freedoms prove elusive, choices are often few and onerous, and most attempts to improve things seem to make them worse' (Knapp 2010: 254).

<sup>210</sup> A Spanish term, often associated with flamenco that refers to the power to attract through personal magnetism and charm.

protagonist of Ventura Pons' 1977 documentary film, who 'becomes 'who he is' by sticking to his desires and acting on them' (Mira 2013: 58). Ocaña also performs *copla* in a sort of drag act, very much like La Gitana does. In both cases, authenticity and performance seem to coexist, paradoxically, in the characters' version of the self (ibid).<sup>211</sup> Ocaña is one of many transvestites and drag artists that in democracy have rescued the tradition of *copla*, incorporating it into their shows. Playing with ideas of camp and subverting the conservative values of *copla*, these artists show that even in grotesque performances, these songs hold the power to generate deep feelings (Mira 2004: 348).

### 3.2.1.2. Spanish camp

In Spain, *copla* is currently related to ideas of gay camp. Gay camp refers, not to specific contents but to the ironic mode in which those contents are used.<sup>212</sup> Alberto Mira concludes that camp is associated with a homosexual positioning of contents proceeding from popular arts and whose sense emerges from recycling these forms (2004: 145). Camp talks about homosexuality without making it explicit. It's cultivated by homosexuals with effort, style, gesture. It's a response to the stereotype rather than a reproduction of it. It is a gay gaze that activates parody, recognises kitsch, and questions gender roles (2004: 147). Camp works similarly in many homosexual Western traditions – it is the contents that change depending on the particular national context.

The emergence of 'camp' in Spanish democracy is of special relevance given the political history of the dictatorship. Camp was manifest in some theatrical subcultures (such as *cuplé*), but during the Franco era, anything suspected to be sexual perversion was rarely tolerated (Mira 2004: 338). Despite 'camp' not being explicitly homosexual,<sup>213</sup> it employs a frivolous language that would hurt/affect Francoist sensibilities that focused on the worthy and noble nature of the dictatorship and its ideals. Camp in Spanish is commonly referred to as *pluma*, and it is still used in a negative way (2004: 146). The camp gaze has found difficult assimilation even in homophile discourse and its consequent gay critique, accused of frivolity and escapism

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<sup>211</sup> David Rodríguez Solas in his study of Ocaña argues that he 'opted to disidentify with all labels as he confronted both gender norms and the countercultural public sphere' (2018: 83).

<sup>212</sup> For Moe Meyer, camp is always part of gay culture; for Judith Butler, it is related to the parodic style of drag queens; and for Richard Dyer it has been activated politically by homosexual communities in times of oppression (Mira 2004: 145).

<sup>213</sup> The theatrical 'imitation' of women by men is not necessarily associated with homosexuality, as evidenced by long traditions like that of Elizabethan and Noh theatres (Mira 2004: 147).

by gay activists.<sup>214</sup> Nonetheless, it was an attitude that manifested strongly during the first years of the transition to democracy. During those years, transvestites and 'queens' were excluded from progressive homosexual collectives (and to a certain level they still are), as they are seen as confirming gay stereotypes and moving away from the focus on a political struggle. *Copla* is one of the artistic forms most commonly used by transvestites and drag artists, however *copla* in its camp re-appropriation cannot be defined as escapist.<sup>215</sup>

Camp recycling is often discussed in textual terms, like a postmodern writing mechanism (Mira 2004: 150). When a drag artist imitates a *cuplé* or *copla* singer, s/he is taking the image out of its original context (desire, femininity) and transforming it into a spectacle that generates certain excitement and/or fascination for the heterosexual spectator. In this way, camp discourse gives room for a certain complicity between creatives and audience, and there is often a suspicion or certainty of a common understanding.<sup>216</sup> As part of the camp discourse, the emotional insistence of *The Copla Solo* leads to a melodramatic intensity, questions sexual genders as socially established roles, and identifies with feminine positioning and effeminacy. This subverts a situation of extreme repression like Francoism. As long as there is a conscience of difference generated by heterosexist domination, camp will serve to question those structures, and even to confront them (Mira 2004: 339). Camp presents an intimate confrontation that uses the emotions as a powerful weapon.

The lyrics of the original *copla* songs remain a strong catalyst for Spanish audiences of universal feelings such as love, revenge, jealousy, passion, betrayal, solitude... whereas the contextual clichés of patriotism and national-catholic virtue<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> 'Desde Ulrichs hasta el FAGC de los setenta, ha habido entre los homosexuales una tendencia fuerte a distanciarse de la pluma como expresión de un estereotipo homófobo. Los defensores de las teorías que hablan de homosexualidad como un tercer sexo tratarán de mantener las distancias respecto de algo que consideran, como mínimo, simplificador' (Mira 2004: 152). From Ulrichs to the FAGC of the 1970s, there has been a strong tendency among homosexuals to distance themselves from camp as an expression of a homophobic stereotype. The defenders of homosexuality as a third sex considered camp something simplifying at the very least (Mira 2004: 152).

<sup>215</sup> 'La mirada camp está procesando mitos culturales heterosexistas, potencialmente opresivos, para convertirlos en un discurso de placer y de afirmación de la marginalidad' (Mira 2004: 349). The camp regard is processing heterosexist cultural myths, potentially oppressive, to transform them in a discourse of pleasure and affirmation of marginality (Mira 2004: 349).

<sup>216</sup> Gil de Biedma explains the gay specificity of camp influenced by Susan Sontag's essay 'Notes on Camp'. He argues that camp involves an exchange between author and reader: if the reader doesn't recognise/identify the references, he won't understand or enjoy them. Camp features ludic aspects (provocation), performativity, a gaze through intertextuality and a complicity with gay audiences. What matters is not what the artist is trying to say but his relationship with the representation system (in Mira 2004: 149).

<sup>217</sup> As noted in Chapter 2.3.2, the social ultra-catholic model imposed by Franco's dictatorship from 1939 to 1975 was characterised by controlling and repressing all sexuality, especially that of women and those who tried to escape heteronormative canons.

are now seen in perspective. The oldest audiences can also relate to other intrinsic themes and memories, consequential to the historical context, such as war, hunger, lack of freedom, loss of the loved ones and the vicarious hope that the songs provided through identification. This cathartic moment of identification is expected to happen in performance. *Copla* has historically moved audiences through its lyrical intensity and its dramatic vocal performance.<sup>218</sup> *Copla* is the 'pathos' turned into musical and gestural interpretation (Hurtado 2003: 1001). Simon Frith defends that:

Songs lyrics work as speech and speech acts, bearing meaning not just semantically, but also as structures of sounds that are direct signs of emotion and marks of character. [...] The voice is an apparently transparent reflection of feeling; it is the sound of the voice, not the words sung, which suggests what a singer really means (1987: 97-8).

We can find examples of this emotional confrontation in many lyrics of *The Copla Solo*. Some of the regular *copla* semantic fields that can be found in the show are women, love, the homeland, the prison, secrets, lack of freedom and pain. Even though in Francoist times, men were not supposed to articulate fear or cry (as this was considered a weakness and one identified dangerously with homosexuality), they do so in *copla* songs. Men and women often lament the loss of the lover, as for instance in song *Ay pena penita pena*. This song, renamed 'Sorrow' in *The Copla Solo* is re-contextualised, and La Gitana cries and laments her lack of freedom, both physical (as she is in prison) and spiritual (as she cannot be her true gendered self). This is a cathartic moment in the show, and audience members have often admitted being in tears at this point. The song holds strong semantic associations for those who knew it in its original context, and this, together with its new dramatic contextualisation, offers a vicarious experience in which the audience lives through the character, as well as they might remember their personal experience of the original song.

Another example of a re-contextualisation of a *copla* song is *La bien pagá* ('The Fairly Paid'). In *The Copla Musical*, faithful to the original lyrics, the song articulated the dramatic moment in which El Americano abandons La Gitana. *The Copla Solo* rewrites the context of the song and it presents a moment of empowerment, in which the narrator confronts his conventional life and partner, and makes the resolution to pursue his true self. The re-contextualisation of this song also updates the traditional heterosexual couple for an openly gay one. This evidences the covert meanings that

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<sup>218</sup> With the emergence of the radio, the popularization of *copla* became associated with vocal performance: popular classes could hear *copla* everywhere, and the voice became the only means to communicate all the drama, to evoke an ambiance to move or make audiences laugh (Hurtado 2003: 49).

*copla* songs held for homosexual audiences, who remained in the subcultures of Francoism, only able to live openly following the transition to democracy. Silenced in every field, homosexuals became very receptive to *copla* (Mira 2004: 347).<sup>219</sup> Dignified by the emotional interpretation of the singers, the source of homosexual feelings was the perception of their own position of marginality. Further to the identification, the best songs contributed to a process where a difficult experience was recycled and sublimated in poetic terms, so becoming a cathartic confrontation in *The Copla Solo*.

*La bien pagá's* lyricist Ramón Perelló and original singer Miguel de Molina were exiled during the Franco era because of their respective Republican and homosexual affiliations. The most prolific *copla* lyricist, Rafael de León, was also presumed homosexual. From an aristocratic family, De León maintained a back seat during the dictatorship and, protected by his contacts, sympathised with a bohemian underground culture and wrote many *copla* songs full of innuendo while maintaining good relations with the regime. He thus avoided being questioned or investigated (Mira 2004: 345). The fact that De León is responsible for most of those lyrics is not irrelevant. Mira critiques the 1994 study on De León by Acosta Díaz, Gómez Lara and Jiménez Barrientos<sup>220</sup> for not revealing De León's homosexuality or any aspects of his private life that relate to his work (ibid). Mira analyses encrypted gay messages in De León's poetry and considers that his position and the impact of his work on society during the dictatorship is considerable. He seemed to be in tune with positions such as 'love in solitude, forbidden passion, secrets, rumour, rejection, sense of pain/heartbreak' (ibid). He spoke through the divas of the time (Concha Piquer, Juanita Reina, Lola Flores, Estrellita Castro) and the listeners of those divas recognised themselves in the lyrics of the songs.

Mira and Sieburth both argue that identification with marginality is the only faithful interpretation of the *copla* texts. The direct referent from De León's lyrics were love affairs that Francoism deemed marginal, sinning and despicable (Mira 2004: 348). Equally, there are many homosexual innuendos in *cuplé* songs. The culture of *cuplé* was surrounded by sexual features. The protagonists of these songs were 'easy' women that at the time would be marginalised for their interest or disposition to sex. While these singers would cause sexual excitement in the male audience, the re-contextualisation of these songs by drag artists generates humour, but also allow a way to satisfy some level of male homoerotic feelings, as male audiences would argue

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<sup>219</sup> According to Mira, gay spectators enjoyed *copla* songs and identified with their narratives independently from their own social status and libido. For instance, the song *Tatuaje* speaks about sombre passions with exotic men in transit, from the perspective of a marginal prostitute (2004: 348).

<sup>220</sup> *Poemas y canciones de Rafael de León* (Acosta et al, 1994).

that what attracted them to drag performers was their apparent femininity (Mira 2004: 155).

In *The Copla Solo* there is an inclusion of two *cuplé* songs: *Las tardes del Ritz* ('The Ritz Afternoons') and *Sola en la vida* ('Life Can Be Lonely'). These numbers are performed in a traditional camp fashion<sup>221</sup> that uses humour and ambiguity to depict a fake femininity. Álvaro Retana, author of *Las tardes del Ritz*, was a self-proclaimed homosexual in 1920s Madrid, and one of the initiators of the Spanish camp tradition. As Mira notes, camp is not about creating an illusion of femininity: camp takes place when the performer steps out of its part and ironizes, making visible the distance between imitation and reality (Mira 2004: 147). The camp gaze in these musical numbers is ironic: representation is conscious, the content represented goes in between quotation marks. The character of the narrator does not identify with a woman but rather offers a parody of the gestures associated with the feminine condition. The performance of these *cuplé* songs in *The Copla Solo* responds to an interesting diegetic moment in which the actor, in relation with his audience, is interpreting both the narrator and La Gitana. There is a performative consciousness at play; as such the priority during these numbers is not their dramatic narrative, but rather performance qualities such as the authenticity, spontaneity and interactivity that characterise revues and drag acts.<sup>222</sup> Ambiguity is one of the principal features of the camp discourse evidenced in the *cuplé*. Camp speaks of omnisexuality and questions the concept of sexual orientation, so almost nothing in Retana's lyrics is symbolic (Mira 2004: 160). In Chapter 1, I compared the revues containing *cuplé* songs with the ones made of Tin Pan Alley songs. Mira also compares Retana to Noel Coward (2004: 155), which invites a consideration of a parallel international development of musical theatre forms pre-Franco. Only in a camp aesthetic forged during democracy it has been possible to rejuvenate the otherwise old-fashioned forms of *cuplé* and *copla*, often associated with the dictatorship.

Like *cuplé* and *copla*, jukebox musicals are commonly associated with choices of camp and entertainment over any other values. However, as Millie Taylor notes, it is the prior cognisance of songs found in new contexts that gives access to 'a sense of self-awareness, silliness, and camp that provokes the audience to a greater intertextual awareness that voluptuously exceeds the boundaries of a realistic text' (2012: 165).

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<sup>221</sup> Recycling the original lyrics into a homosexual attitude that is not made explicit, but rather responds to the stereotypes in a parodic manner.

<sup>222</sup> Authenticity, or the sense that a star truly is what she seems to be, is created rhetorically, through the use of words like 'sincere, immediate, spontaneous, real, direct, genuine and by the use of markers that indicate lack of control, lack of premeditation and privacy' (Dyer 1991: 132-33).

*Copla* and *cuplé* provide this sort of identification when re-contextualised or when their performative style is changed. Nevertheless, these songs are often totally unknown to non-Spanish audiences who could not relate to any prior knowledge or experience; so, they only have the potential to bring personal associations or nostalgia to Spanish audiences who are aware of the songs' early history. My original aim in the creation of this project was to rejuvenate *copla* outside of Spain and to demonstrate its dramatic value abroad. That led me to create a third iteration of the show, *The Copla Cabaret*.

### 3.3. THIRD ITERATION: THE CABARET (2015-17)<sup>223</sup>

The selection and arrangement of *copla* songs up to this point in the practice has been conditioned by the songs' pre-existing narratives and historical context. *The Copla Musical* included songs that responded to the standards of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish society and dealt with themes such as political freedom, the longing for the homeland and non-reciprocated, unrequited or tortuous love. The Solo version has addressed the camp perspective of *copla* in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and evidenced the identification of queer collectives with the form up to this day. Both versions are inspired by the cultural and political values of *copla* and its interaction with Spanish society at various points in history. Despite translations and intercultural adaptations of the songs, non-Spanish (and even young Spanish) audiences who are not familiar with *copla*'s historical influence risk a certain level of alienation when engaging with the show. Levelling the experience of Spanish and non-Spanish audiences became a priority at this point in the practice as a way of attempting a more equitable basis of cultural exchange.

After *The Copla Musical* and *The Copla Solo*, it seemed necessary to provide and deconstruct a detailed understanding of *copla* for all types of audiences. For that purpose, I wanted to develop an artistic language to explore the intercultural adaptation of *copla* within the show's own idiom, that is, I established a cross-cultural dialogue with audiences of different nationalities on-stage. *The Copla Cabaret* was thus created to confront the concerns of the Spanish author with the experience of a non-Spanish audience. The practice was presented in Collisions 2015 with aims to interrogate the conditional position of audience reception in the intercultural exchange. Differently to the previous two iterations of the show that focused on the audience's experience of *copla* under a narrative premise, in *The Copla Cabaret* each audience member was encouraged to experience their own interaction with *copla*, conditioned by their

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<sup>223</sup> *The Copla Cabaret* as presented at Collisions 2015: [https://youtu.be/4BCOIUO\\_Q9I](https://youtu.be/4BCOIUO_Q9I)

nationality, cultural heritage and their previous knowledge of the genre. In this iteration, I once again revisited the key analytical points of dramaturgy, song adaptation, queer identification and performance style in front of a live audience, and I explored how an intercultural approach would challenge the creation of new musical theatre by bringing material largely unknown outside Spain, in this case *copla*, into a UK stage. The cabaret seemed the best format to test these research concerns in an artistic manner.

### 3.3.1. The cabaret as Practice-as-Research format

Michael Friedman, in his essay 'Cabaret as Drama' (2006) loosely defines the cabaret form as a theatre space where audiences are subjected to a performative experience they cannot really anticipate: 'it should be fun and upsetting, professional but not smooth, unexpected but not esoteric' (2006: 326).<sup>224</sup> Friedman insists that cabaret is not 'Concerts; Stand-up Comedy or Improv; Theatre for Children; Performances of Classics; American Musical Theatre; Avant-garde Theatre' (2006: 321), even though that is what audiences most commonly encounter under that frame in America.<sup>225</sup> Cabaret has evolved throughout its existence from being considered a privileged art form to becoming a subversive place of encounter.<sup>226</sup> Because of the popularity of the American book musical *Cabaret* (1966), artists and audiences developed an idea of what a cabaret should be, taking the musical as reference. A similar thing happened with the postmodern musical *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (1994),<sup>227</sup> that I have discussed in the previous section. Neither *Cabaret* or *Hedwig* represent, in my view,

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<sup>224</sup> 'What is cabaret-theatre? It is: Presentational; Musical; Sexy; Popular; Inexpensive; Dangerous; Messy; Connected. (...) By definition, [cabaret] was a hermetic movement, a place for artists to create art away from conservative culture and politics. Based in the idea of *kleinkunst*, "small art" or "art in small forms", Cabaret was opposed to the monumental forms of late nineteenth-century high art and kitsch. For the artists of the cabaret, these small forms included popular song, pantomime, puppet, shadow play, circus, variety show, poetry, parody, street-song, dance, short plays and sketches, and monologues. Here was a way to merge the worlds of high and low art, without losing the piquancy of either' (Friedman 2006: 320).

<sup>225</sup> 'Where is cabaret in American theatre? It survives, nominally, in nightclubs where singers, some brilliant, some terrible, sing standards with a two-drink minimum. It survives as a sort of collegiate black-box setting, as in the Yale Drama School's cabaret, where raucous productions of new and old plays are performed for drunken graduate students and others. It certainly survives in the rock concert. (...) Cabaret in America has, with the exception of its vaudeville roots, tended to be expensive, and therefore fancy' (Friedman 2006: 321).

<sup>226</sup> 'If Cabarets were from the outset elitist virtually by definition, the art for which they became best known was anything but that. It aimed, above all, at ending the hegemony of art that was either elitist by virtue of patronage or audience, or bourgeois by virtue of its standards and conventions' (Segel 1987: p.xvii).

<sup>227</sup> 'Perhaps the one-person show, where the performative aspect is unavoidable, and the relationship to the audience is essential, has become the last great refuge of cabaret-theatre. (...) Obviously, *Hedwig* owes a debt to the MC of *Cabaret* – both pieces are transparently set in 'cabarets', and both guide their audiences through a political journey with the aid of a central, pansexual performer as guide' (Friedman 2006: 323).

accurate depictions of the cabaret form, which implies subversion, personal exposure of the performing artists and interaction. Musicals are frequently polished, thoroughly rehearsed and under-control whereas cabaret, as Friedman argues, must leave some space for ‘the possibility of disaster’<sup>228</sup> which is central to the performance (2006: 321).

The camp reinterpretation of *cuplé* and *copla* songs fits well within the cabaret format. Furthermore, vintage plays like Rodríguez Méndez’s *Autumn Flower* (1983) describe the world of cabaret and revues featuring drag acts in Spain at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, the cabaret seemed a fitting format for the purposes of my multi-modal research. It establishes artistic conversations with various critical frameworks and even different modes of communication (performance and lecturing being the obvious choices). This chapter demonstrates how, through my Practice-as-Research, I have surveyed and analysed case studies and dramaturgical paradigms in musical theatre forms (musical revue, book-based musical, jukebox) that relate to my own creative process of selecting and discarding creative ideas to make *The Copla Musical* and *The Copla Solo*. In creating these pieces for non-Spanish audiences, I identified some of the cultural tropes or values that, embedded in those dramaturgical principles, would make transparent (or juxtapose) the Anglo-based and Spanish-based cultures, so that the shows could navigate the cultural difference.<sup>229</sup> I saw Interculturalism as a means to solve the problem of mixing and encountering two cultures, but I could not anticipate that my intercultural translation, coming from a contemporary view of *copla*, implied a double refraction, that of understanding a culturally-loaded form from a historical point of view, as well as a new narrative device.

Playwright and translator Steve Gooch observes that ‘the scream behind the original author’s work will be difficult enough to transmit without trying to second guess its public reception’ (1996: 20). So far, I have second guessed audience reactions only to realize that without the cultural knowledge, not only of *copla*, but also of Spain’s recent history, the appreciation or connection to the pieces would strongly vary for different audience members. As discussed earlier in the chapter, the material conditions of producing a musical, including the intercultural nature of the work and the historical moment in which the piece is produced, affect the audiences’ reception of the work. It would then be fair to assume that the potentially diverse and multicultural London audience has impacted significantly the already complex collaborative process

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<sup>228</sup> ‘It is the messiness that makes cabaret-theatre vital, that connects it to its roots in vaudeville, in Berlin, in the drag show, in the café-concert, in the opera house, in the music hall, on the showboat, in melodrama, in the commedia, the nightclub’ (Friedman 2006: 321).

<sup>229</sup> As discussed earlier in the Chapter, I considered, for instance, principles of ‘intertextuality’, ‘representation’ and ‘verisimilitude’ when addressing issues of song selection and transposition.

of developing and staging the various iterations of *The Copla Musical*. According to Zach Dunbar, the role of a researcher when undertaking Practice-as-Research in musical theatre is also ‘to enact or activate embedded legacies, by which [he] mean[s] embodied knowledge that is instantiated or coming to be during research’ (2014: 63). I thus decided to use my embedded knowledge in the performance, and to present *copla* also from my personal experience, both as a researcher and a performer, but also as an admirer of the form.<sup>230</sup>

### 3.3.2. The intercultural exchange

*The Copla Cabaret* begins by questioning what is *copla*, and how would I share my experience of *copla* with an audience. The question ‘How will I make you feel like I feel?’ becomes a connecting thread through the various stages of the show, by which audiences are taken across an interactive journey to discover *copla* through my own understanding. Therefore, I introduce myself briefly at the beginning of the show to establish a dynamic dialogue with the audience from the start:

How many people in this room have watched a musical in a foreign language? What about a foreign musical translated to English? I started loving *copla* when living abroad because it reminded me of who I am, where I come from, but now I wonder if that’s where I belong. *Copla* has always been available for gays in need and marginalized collectives, for which *copla* became the expression of a Spain to dream about. These songs are a way of expressing the longing, the memories, the sighs for the homeland of those who had to leave the country (excerpt from *The Copla Cabaret*, 2015).

This excerpt of the show anticipates the themes I am going to explore with the audience throughout the cabaret. As Dunbar points out, ‘the presentation of the research findings may imbue the research knowledge with a liveness: (...) a kind of praxis which constitutes the integrative momentum, or ebb and flow between theory and practice’ (2014: 67). The intentions of *The Copla Cabaret* are in place from the start. The show includes five musical numbers, but only three of them are *coplas*, and differently to previous iterations of the show, these are not presented in an integrated way but they are rather de-constructed to cover distinct aspects of the dramaturgy and

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<sup>230</sup> ‘Cabaret in this sense is the idea of a certain kind of performance and its relationship to the audience – half play, half concert, certainly personality-based, not a replacement for theatre, but an alternative. Cabaret is, above all, illegitimate. In fact, I am not sure that there is a better description for it than the one given by the District Attorneys of New York: an obscene, indecent, immoral, and impure drama, play exhibition, show and entertainment’ (Friedman 2006: 319).

research.

The first musical number is *La bien pagá*, presented as a combination of three distinct versions. First, we see video clips of the original *copla* performance by Miguel de Molina, then the English adaptation as performed in *The Copla Musical*, and finally another English jazz version by Spanish artist Martirio. I then attempt a live performance of all three versions, attending to the peculiarities of each style. The versions from Miguel de Molina and Martirio are almost 80 years apart, and reinterpretations of *copla* songs are viewed by scholars with scepticism. Sonia Hurtado, for example, speaks about modern artists attempting a reinterpretation of the songs and these reinterpretations being more apparent or anecdotal than real because *copla* is a 'closed corpus, and like other literary series, any renovation attempt is destined to fail' (2003: 1009). According to Hurtado, *copla* has acquired a classical value that will last and resist any changes (ibid), but I aim to challenge this notion. Through this practice, I intend to take *copla* out of this unchangeable historical frame that some artists and historians have identified, and open up the corpus to new influences and ideas.

Next in the show, I explore the significance of American musicals in Spain. I do this through the case-study of *The Sound of Music* (1959), whose film version (1965) enjoyed great popularity in Spain. Audiences around the world are familiar with its musical numbers, most especially 'Do Re Mi'. While I project a clip of the original film version in which Julie Andrews sings with the children, I invite the Collisions audience (made up predominantly of British people) to sing along with me onstage accompanied by live piano. The experiment goes well, most people in the audience know the song and this proves the popularity and legacy of this musical almost 60 years later. Suddenly, I prompt a language change and I offer audiences in the room the possibility to sing the song in Spanish. This is one of the many examples in which things can go wrong in cabaret and there is room for disaster. I do not know (neither can anticipate) if there will be Spanish people in the audience, and if there are, whether they will know the song. I am prepared for any outcome, but once again the experiment goes well. There are Spanish audiences in the room that have come to the show attracted by its *copla* theme, and sing along to 'Do Re Mi' in Spanish.

The rendering of English musical theatre texts into Spanish provides a good example of theatre translation as 'productive reception' by making the source theatre and culture productive again in a foreign context (Aaltonen 2000: 49). The cultural roles of translation and adaptation are evidenced in our experiment, as Spanish audiences agree with me that as children, we all thought that Fraulein Maria's Spanish voice was

her real one, and that the song had originated in Spanish. Why would we think otherwise? Dubbing was enforced during the Franco era on film texts, and this practice has been maintained throughout democracy and to the present day. *The Sound of Music* had been influential in my childhood as it had been for many generations of American children, however I could not find any examples of any Spanish musicals that might have been translated and referenced outside Spain. The experience of listening to *The Sound of Music* in Spanish was quite revealing for Anglo-speaking audiences who, so familiar with their original English version, could probably not expect to hear the musical in other languages. This led to the next phase of my experiment, an inverted translation from the Spanish lyrics back to English. This was done in a humorous way, but helped to prove the point that maybe, if *copla* songs were translated and exposed to other cultures as Anglo-American musicals have been worldwide, they could potentially be enjoyed and influence artists and audiences as English-language musicals have.

While the importation of Anglo-American musicals into Spain follows what Aaltonen calls the 'reverence' mode of translation (Aaltonen 2000: 64), this cultural trade has often happened only in one direction, which is what Lo and Gilbert critique as the lack of flow that leads to cultural imperialism (2002). In that act of translation, the receiver is as central to the act of communication as the sender, and this is crucial to the dynamics of stage/audience complicity (Johnston 1996: 8). Therefore, the Spanish lyrics of *The Sound of Music* differ from the original as English *copla* will differ from Spanish *copla*. By this point in the show, the complicity is established and I believe Anglo-speaking audiences have some understanding of what is at stake. This leads to the idea of making *The Copla Musical* as a project suitable for non-Spanish audience appreciation.

### **3.3.3. English *copla***

The next section in the show explores the narratives of *copla* songs and their suitability as musical theatre songs. To exemplify this, I perform the English version of *copla Tatuaje* ('Tattoo'), but differently to my previous shows *The Copla Musical* and *The Copla Solo*, in the cabaret there are spoken parts that deconstruct the loaded narrative. In this version, in addition to playing the parts of both the sailor and the prostitute that feature in the original *copla* narrative (which are matched by El Americano and La Gitana in *The Copla Musical*), I also take the position of a narrator that conducts the storytelling. The original *Tatuaje*, written in 1941 by Rafael de León, has been

considered a 'homoerotic poem disguised as heteronormative *copla* that ends up being reformulated or interiorised as homosexual love (García Piedra, 199).<sup>231</sup> The song was very popular in the day,<sup>232</sup> and despite being close to marginality and rich in passion and sexuality, it managed to avoid the censorship of the Franco regime. It is one of the best-known and best-remembered *coplas* in Spain and, as indicated by Vázquez Montalbán, has played an important role in the emotional history of the country (in Mira: 2004: 344).

As discussed in Chapter 1, there has been a worldwide cultural and linguistic hegemony of Anglo-American musicals since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>233</sup> and 'the criteria behind the selection of musical (source) texts for performance is a key issue in their success in Spain' (Mateo 2008: 329). The choice of suitable texts is always based on the needs of the target audience and compatibility of the discourse of the source text with that of the target culture (Aaltonen 2000:49). A text that succeeds in the target culture is what Erika Fischer-Lichte calls 'productive reception' (1990). To obtain a productive reception of *copla* abroad, I have had to consider a general interest and empathy with the materials that responds to those target needs. Songs in musicals work as concise expressions of character; three minutes of music are considered equivalent to fifteen minutes of dialogue (Engel 2006: 42). *Tatuaje* seems a suitable match to those requirements: it has a solid narrative and well-defined characters that manage to present their poetic story in around three minutes. It is perhaps not surprising that this song was often performed in theatrical settings when it was first released in Spain, as the contents allow for dramatic interpretation.

The newly conceived English *copla* is the result of an intercultural exchange that takes into account my own position (a gay musical theatre performer) and my connection to the source culture, the characteristics of *copla* itself, and the outside world in which the 'goods' are exchanged, that is, 21<sup>st</sup>-century London. With that in mind, in the next section of *The Copla Cabaret*, I present an onstage transformation into a drag persona about to perform 21<sup>st</sup>-century English *copla*. Only that I experiment

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<sup>231</sup> *Tatuaje*'s emotional truth is that of 'passion in gloom, in clandestine dens, with passing exotic men from a perspective of irredeemable marginality' (Mira 2004: 348). Sobre la verdad emocional en *Tatuaje*: 'la de la pasión en la penumbra, en tugurios, por hombres exóticos que están de paso, desde una perspectiva de irredimible marginalidad (Mira 2004: 348). De León always talks from a female perspective, but there is lots of homosexual imagery: ephemeral sex, sailors, the night, illicitness, heartbreak. The song also compares masculine and feminine desires: the sailor was marked by an unknown woman, now the prostitute is marked by the sailor in the same fashion (Mira 2004: 348).

<sup>232</sup> It achieved the highest gross income recorded in 1941 at the *Sociedad General de Autores* (García Piedra 2008: 189).

<sup>233</sup> Broadway and the West End are the main sources for Spanish musicals (if not the only ones). Nowadays, musicals might be the new bearers of Anglo-American culture (after the influence Hollywood has also had in carrying this culture through the film industry) (Mateo 2008: 330).

with an inversion of a well-known American song contaminated with Spanish musical features. I present the number as wanting to do things 'My Way'. The Spanish-inflected version of the Sinatra classic is a pastiche, and even though the pastiche is a tool often used in musical theatre, Friedman defends pastiche in cabaret as 'the way forward to a new style' (2006: 325). Pastiche thus become an effective tool in cabaret to connect with audiences.<sup>234</sup>

### 3.3.4. My position

My migrant and queer experiences become especially significant in the final sections of *The Copla Cabaret*. Once I become the subversive drag persona of Cassandra, I share my experience of living abroad and thinking of Spain through *copla* songs. The last song of the show, *Suspiros de España* ('Sighs of Spain') precisely talks about the longing for the homeland. It is a very emotional song for many Spanish people as it speaks of leaving Spain and remembering it while being abroad, and is not obviously emotionally accessible for non-Spanish audiences. As a performer, it is my responsibility to attempt to offer this experience to all audiences, Spanish or otherwise, so that they can live vicariously the high emotional component of this *copla* song. Coming back to the premise of the show, I initially asked the audience: 'how can I make you feel what I feel?' But maybe this is impossible. As a researcher, I need to reach some sort of resolution. The dialogue between theory and practice is coming to an end and I want to know how far the outcome of this practice (the cabaret production) has worked towards a sharing of my experience of *copla*. This will hopefully throw light over the initial research enquiry of whether there is a place for *copla* outside Spain in any form of musical theatre.

As an artist, I have tested different formats to integrate *copla* into musical theatre, and even tried to incorporate elements of cabaret performance style and content to create a hybrid *copla* show. Like Friedman, I have questioned how to integrate the impromptu quality of cabaret with the various possible forms of musical theatre as it is the contradictions amid both forms -the space 'in between'- that excite me the most. The 'in-between-ness' is a concept that comes out strongly in the resolution of this show. Friedman positions his artistic interests in between 'the possibility of disaster and the need for a well-rehearsed performance, [in between] the emotional sweep and even glorious cheesiness of the Musical and the tightness and

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<sup>234</sup> 'If any performance these days can only connect, it has already succeeded beyond all dreams' (Friedman 2006: 321).

punch of the political cabaret song' (2006: 324). Equally, throughout the show, I have positioned myself 'in between': in between countries, in between genders, in between historical periods, or in between artistic forms. The show concludes:

*Copla* is for everyone that feels in between. It's lived in between political factions, it's expressed passions in between lovers, it's been performed in between genres (...) and now I am placing it in between cultures: in between you and me (excerpt from *The Copla Cabaret*, 2015).

In the final epilogue of the show, I interact with the audience one final time during the curtain call and invite them to sing the English *copla* 'The Fairly Paid' with lyrics projected onstage. This challenge for both Spanish and non-Spanish audiences evidences the difficult task of translating and performing English *copla*, but also gives a taste of the hidden pleasure involved for those who, throughout the show, have come to appreciate or identify with the songs, or to develop some sort of connection. The translation is simple, direct and effective as audiences by that point become the actors, and the lyrics of the English *copla* their script. Gooch defends that 'actors must be able to wear the language of the play like clothes. (...) The language must be 'natural', by which [he] mean[s] current, intelligible and meaningful at more than just a literal or conceptual level' (Gooch 1996: 16). Through the audience participation, it is possible to get an indication of the success and acceptance of the new English *copla*, at least in a qualitative capacity. It would be necessary to test the work more widely and to adapt it to different audience demographics to get a quantitative conclusion. The participation of audiences at the end of the show would provide some indication as to whether I have succeeded in the intentional aspects of my research: whether the new English *copla* is a useful hybrid form and how it might work embedded in a musical for non-Spanish audiences. I have pursued this task of intercultural adaptation both as a Spanish immigrant artist and as an assimilated academic long living in the UK. Thus, I end the show with the following quote by Frantisek Deak that represents my position:

As many others who have left their native country, I can have at least two identities, take part in or distance myself from two cultures, and cherish or dread the experience, depending on circumstances or mood – to live two lives side by side, if ever that were possible (1989: 69).

## CONCLUSIONS

I began this research project asking how an Anglo-American musical theatre structure could guide the development of *copla* outside Spain and what would happen to *copla* songs if they converged with the structural principles embedded in the integrated book-based musical. Given the changeable form of Spanish musical theatre throughout its history (with Zarzuelas, revues and variety shows), I have questioned whether there are any common musical and textual features in the *copla* songs that lend themselves to a unique form of musical theatre that is suitable to be translated and exported outside Spain. Throughout the creative process of making *The Copla Musical*,<sup>235</sup> I have explored the artistic benefits of developing the newly translated English *copla*, which I see as a form with the potential to have an impact on contemporary musical theatre. So how might an experiment like *The Copla Musical* further our understanding of cultural and artistic processes that have been interrupted, and why is it important to give *copla* a contemporary makeover? In the following paragraphs, I will attempt to discuss what has been accomplished by creating this new form of English *copla*.

This hybrid and modernised form of the traditional *copla* style highlights a process of intercultural adaptation, a phenomenon which not only defines the emergence of new forms of musical theatre but also emphasizes how present-day imports of mega-musicals exert a strong influence on the development of localised forms of musical theatre. Through the creation of three distinct shows gravitating around this central idea, I have offered an expansion of the genre of *copla* outside of Spain. *The Copla Musical* is a hybrid experiment, resulting from the crossing of Anglo-American and Spanish cultures in its writing and performance. The preservation of *copla* necessitates an intercultural adaptation because its traditional performance codes no longer respond to a perceived social reality, and as a result no new *copla* songs have been written since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Although it is nostalgically performed and cherished in Spain, the return of *copla* is largely limited to a recycling of musical numbers by contemporary artists. But through experimentation and rejuvenation with ideas and forms from other cultures, *copla* acquires the potential to experience a new existence that could articulate particular modes of practice for further intercultural projects in musical theatre. Creative tools for adaptation that take cultural

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<sup>235</sup> For the purposes of the conclusions of this thesis, *The Copla Musical* refers, unless specified, to the three iterations of the show, including *The Copla Solo* and *The Copla Cabaret*.

sensitivities into consideration can offer strategies for the potential reinterpretation of *copla* through different frames of reference.

British and American musical theatre have historically proven to be dominant models in both composition and performance, and when exchanging cultural values with an indigenous art form such as *copla*, tensions arise in the interface. Therefore, the Anglophone structure of the book musical serves primarily as a guide to inform an imagined model for the development of a *copla* musical. I have explained how sometimes in musical theatre, a composer tries to recreate an atmosphere by incorporating some elements from a folkloric tradition.<sup>236</sup> This is not the case with *The Copla Musical*, as I am not seeking to recreate an atmosphere but rather to offer new dramatic contents. *Copla* songs are culturally-loaded stories that provoke immediate identification for a certain demographic of Spanish audiences, but I believe they still have the capacity to transport other audiences to a time and a place that they may not be familiar with. However, these songs, having such a strong evocative power connected to Spanish history and sensibilities, need to be contextualised for international comprehension. Otherwise they risk losing part of their artistic and cultural value.

In *The Copla Musical*, *copla* songs assume narrative and dramaturgical functions. But these depend on the willingness to preserve the original material. For instance, a successful adaptation must fulfil the song's purpose, illuminate the characters' dramatic journey and advance the plot, or sometimes neglect some of these functions in order to maintain the non-translatable qualities of the original *copla* song. But what is translatable and what is not and who decides that? Some audiences might perceive *copla* sung in Spanish as more 'authentic', but it is reasonable to think that if actors sang all songs in *The Copla Musical* in Spanish, non-Spanish speaking audiences would not understand much of the content or be able to follow the narrative, which could lead them to disengage with the show. While the definition of authenticity is subject to interpretation and beyond the scope of this research,<sup>237</sup> 'intercultural products cannot await anyone's pleasure, including that of the country from which borrowings are made. (...) What is hybrid in one century often represents the essence of purity in another' (Dasgupta 1991: 250). Some Spanish audiences listening to English *copla* in *The Copla Musical* have claimed that no matter how accurate,

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<sup>236</sup> For instance, in *The Mikado* (1885) Gilbert and Sullivan tried to recreate a Japanese atmosphere through music that effectively sounded Japanese to a Western audience, and that was the case too with Puccini and *Madame Butterfly* (1903).

<sup>237</sup> Authenticity has been widely discussed in the area of popular music as a contentious criterion to delimit truth and sense of belonging to a specific culture. For more information, see Barker (2007).

emotional, daring or overall well-achieved the translations of the songs might be, they feel at times alienated from these songs in English: this 'alienation' is associated with their previous knowledge or nostalgic<sup>238</sup> experience of the original *copla* songs, embedded in Spanish culture and not easily translatable. Thus, as different audiences respond in different ways to the material depending on their cultural formation, the new form of English *copla* is mainly created to appeal to a wider intercultural audience in English-speaking countries, but also appreciated by Spanish audiences who support the idea of *copla* being internationalized as a means of cultural expansion.

Equally, in the international presentations of *The Copla Musical*, non-Spanish speaking audiences generally accept and praise English *copla* as an indigenous art form that is fully accessible.<sup>239</sup> It therefore seems that English *copla* has the potential to be received as a new intercultural form which is a result of its time and context: a musical and dramatic musical theatre artefact targeted mainly for English-speaking audiences with an interest in Spanish culture. There is not currently a category in musical theatre that fits a project like *The Copla Musical*. The hybrid and modernised *copla* musical that I have explored highlights my process of intercultural adaptation, a process that not only demonstrates the emergence of new forms of musical theatre, but also emphasizes how present-day imports of mega-musicals exert a strong influence on the development of localised forms of musical theatre. At the same time, the practice has generated questions that challenge, renew or complement current theory about intercultural adaptation. In that sense, the three *copla* musicals could potentially function as examples of the use of intercultural exchanges as a means of finding innovative ways for musical theatre to develop within an international framework, most specifically by giving voice to cultures that can complement and expand the creative possibilities within the dominant musical theatre industry.

Lo and Gilbert argued that 'collaborative interculturalism' does not focus on maintaining the purity of various cultures for exotic display, but rather on 'exploring the fullness of cultural exchange in all its contradictions and convergences for all parties' (2002: 39). As author of *The Copla Musical* and researcher of this PaR project, I have articulated a vision of how *copla* can communicate to audiences outside Spain. This vision guides an intercultural process focused on exchanging views with other artists

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<sup>238</sup> I understand nostalgia as an individual sentiment of displacement, a romance of one's own fantasy or a longing for a time in the past. Svetlana Boym defines modern nostalgia as 'a mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and boundaries' (2001: xiii).

<sup>239</sup> Views expressed in post-show discussions at the Collisions Festival on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015, the York Music Theatre Festival on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015, and ISTF DC (Bulgaria) on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

from diverse cultures and developing a new intercultural form, English *copla*, for non-Spanish audiences. However, as Scrofano questions in Chapter 2, 'is it possible to develop a cross-cultural dialogue without sacrificing the unique identities of individual artists?' (2012: 290). I believe so. Identity has been a main parameter in all three *copla* shows, it has somehow marked the development of the last two shows and defined my creative relationships with my non-Spanish collaborators. Throughout the development of these shows, every artist has experienced a different interaction with *copla*, conditioned by their previous knowledge of it, their personal connection with it, and the time they have been part of this project. This musical has emerged from these cross-cultural relationships and therefore has not sought to recreate *copla* from an earlier era. *The Copla Musical* is created in contemporary terms, merging 'contemporary performance style with the flavour of the original to create something new and relevant' (Saint-Denis in Kirlé: 2005: 11). *The Copla Musical* is Spanish in source but clearly intercultural in execution.

The reception of *The Copla Musical* has varied throughout the different demographics of audiences who have attended performances of the show. I have studied aspects of that reception through critical surveys and interviews that have helped me assess the acceptance or rejection of the intercultural product. Audiences have been asked after the performances of all three shows about their knowledge of *copla* before attending any of the iterations of *The Copla Musical*. They have also been questioned about their understanding of *copla* after seeing the shows. Whenever the show has included a bilingual combination in the performance of the songs, both in Spain and abroad (for instance in the performances in London, Seville, Barcelona and Bulgaria), audiences have been asked about this combination and their perception of *copla* in both languages. Finally, audiences have recurrently been asked about their experience as musical theatre goes and their perception of *The Copla Musical* as fitting to this genre. Each presentation of the practice has attracted a mixed response from its audiences, depending on the location and the cultural background of its audiences, their experience of musical theatre, and quite simply their personal connection to the show.

Simon Miller argues that 'music's ability to affect its listeners emotionally relies on cultural and historical conditions –the kinds of musical sounds present in a culture at any particular historical moment' (in Wolf 2002: 42). Juxtaposing the Anglo-based and Spanish-based cultures presents an additional challenge to the process of audience engagement, as English *copla* needs to be receptive simultaneously to multiple cultural aspects, such as the internationalization and queer reinterpretation of Spanish *copla*,

and allow for further camp and gender-crossing identifications. Thus, English *copla* becomes a new storytelling device in musical theatre that helps to re-contextualise *copla* culturally and historically. And this process of re-contextualisation involves the exportation of dated texts from the Spanish past and their reinterpretation in English primarily for non-Spanish audiences. Wolf argues that 'cultural competencies are developed in everyday life and can include identity positions of gender, race, class, and sexuality, as well as other kinds of knowledge, [therefore] Identity-oriented interpretation is a culturally constructed practice' (2002: 26). In this project, knowledge of conventions of mid-century American musicals and *copla* are useful in generating intellectual and nostalgic associations with the new materials, but they are not essential to enjoying the shows from a purely artistic perspective. Among the audiences of *The Copla Musical*, there are often spectators that are new to musical theatre and *copla*, and who enjoy the shows primarily as a form of entertainment that goes 'beyond aesthetic appreciation to, quite literally, a performative spectatorship: tapping toes, humming tunes,' and, I would add, experiencing an empathy towards the characters' pathos (Wolf 2002: 33).

Ultimately, the purpose of this project is to present *copla* in a new fashion. In the English performances of *The Copla Musical* shows, songs often combine verses in English and Spanish, thus maintaining a small percentage of the original Spanish lyrics. It is assumed that untranslated verses will remain inaccessible to audiences in terms of dramatic content. However, the English translation provided before or after the delivery of the Spanish lyrics offers a sense of the song and sufficient telling of the story so that non-Spanish-speaking audiences can follow the narrative. The benefit of this strategy is that audiences are also offered a glimpse of what the song sounds like in its original language. Also, some Spanish elements such as the original *copla* narratives, ornamentation, and orchestration are preserved in most songs to maintain some of the original material. Throughout the presentations of *The Copla Solo* in Spanish-speaking countries I have experimented extensively with this idea: in some performances songs have been performed fully translated while in others they have mixed English and Spanish. The aim was to test the audiences' acceptance when songs strayed from their original versions, or when foreign (English) verses slipped into the too familiar territory of a well-known song. The accurate and dramatic translation of the songs plays an important part in the process of exporting *copla* because, as Venuti suggests, 'the translator's invisibility is symptomatic of a complacency in Anglo-American relations with cultural others, a complacency that can be described –without too much exaggeration- as imperialistic abroad and xenophobic at home' (2012: 17).

When sung in English, Spanish audiences generally appreciate the efforts put in the exportation of their culture and praise the translation as something that tries to convey the original narratives while preserving the poetry and artistic features of the original songs.<sup>240</sup>

*The Copla Musical* has probed the notion of cultural sensitivity through the complex dialogue already inherent in collaborative translation and narrative enhancement of *copla*. Through the adaptation of *copla* songs, I sought to render transparent the challenges and solutions that pertain to one of the intercultural principles I pursued: that of maintaining cultural visibility on both sides of the cultural dialogue by identifying specific cultural frames of reference. In this manner, an outcome in terms of the product was to make implicit the artistic values that are historically linked to *copla*, and that implied reengaging with socio-cultural values established during the artistic censorship of Franco's regime. By subverting such values through the adaptation process, the project resonates with the contemporary socio-cultural context of 2018, while commenting on political events like the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent fascist dictatorship. As such, the artistic values essential to *copla* remain implicit, whereas the political associations established by an outdated censorship regime are resituated with the use of new languages in a new historical context.

The practical outcome of this process has led to the production of three professional shows that rejuvenate and expand *copla* outside of Spain.<sup>241</sup> Further steps to rejuvenate *copla* would entail defining the genre according to the canons of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, so that new *copla* songs can be written. This type of practice would eventually lead to a rethinking of the position of *copla* in current Spanish musical theatre and a questioning of what the Spanish musical theatre of the post-Civil War (1940s and '50s) might have needed to evolve a book musical structure like their coeval American shows. This would hopefully lead to a preservation and revitalisation of *copla* and to the development of further works in Spanish musical theatre.

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<sup>240</sup> I have interviewed approximately 500 audience members through survey evaluations filled after most performances. A small sample is attached in Appendix C of this thesis.

<sup>241</sup> For further documentation on the project, please visit [www.thecoplamusical.com](http://www.thecoplamusical.com)

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## APPENDIX A: LIST OF PERFORMANCES AND COLLABORATORS

### THE COPLA MUSICAL

**5<sup>th</sup> October 2011 – Hoxton Hall (London, UK). Work in progress performance:**  
<https://youtu.be/krmzITbFimM>

#### CAST

La Gitana: Alejandro Postigo

El Americano: Ian Sanderson

Campanera: Reyes Hiraldo

Dolores: Carolina Bandeira

Ensemble: Ughetta Pratesi, Ana Gómez, Eva Ferreira Pinheiro, Charlotte Cooking, Laura Mateos and Helena Bytnar

#### CREATIVE TEAM

Choreographer: Miriam Faura

Musical Director/ Guitar: Aris Lanarides

Costumes: Phoenix Thomas

**2<sup>nd</sup>– 4<sup>th</sup> October 2012 – Collisions Festival (The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, UK). Act 2:** <https://youtu.be/H2yiTkUSYdY>

#### CAST

La Gitana: Alejandro Postigo

El Americano: Spencer Irwin

The Mother: Inma Cuevas

Pincho: Imanol Fuentes

Campanera: Violeta García

Doctor/Mr.Simon: Ian Sanderson

#### CREATIVE TEAM

Director: Sarah Johnson

Musical Director: Vassula Delli

Guitar: Sapfo Pantzaki

Movement: Tiziana Silvestre

Lyric Adaptations: Gus Gowland

Lighting Design: Sarah Crocker & Noah Furrer

Sound Design: Lex Kosanke

Costume and Graphic Design: Elisa Ferreras

Hair and Make Up: Ann Marie Mays

Stage Manager: Stella Rogers

Production: Javier Opi, Simona Klaniute, Almudena Adalia and Juan López

**10<sup>th</sup> May 2013 – Roundhouse (London, UK). Work in progress performance:**  
[https://youtu.be/seEvk1zR\\_m4](https://youtu.be/seEvk1zR_m4)

**CAST**

Gitana: Alejandro Postigo

Dolores: Inma Cuevas

Campanera: Violeta García

Jacinta: Carolina Bandeira

Nationalist Soldiers: Spencer Irwin, Ian Sanderson and Alberto Maneiro

El Americano: Simon Pontin

**CREATIVE TEAM**

Director: Reyes Hiraldo

Musical Director: Vassula Delli

Movement: Tiziana Silvestre

Lighting: Sarah Crocker

Costumes: Elisa Ferreras

Production: Almudena Adalia

**27<sup>th</sup>– 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013 (3 Performances)– Collisions Festival (The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London, UK). Act 1:**  
<https://youtu.be/pttULqEYoLw>

**CAST**

La Gitana: Alejandro Postigo

El Americano: Ian Sanderson

Campanera: Violeta García

Dolores: Carolina Bandeira

Jacinto: Javier Rasero

Soldier: Daniel Pérez

Sergeant: Nacho Llorens

The Mother: Patricia Rodríguez

**CREATIVE TEAM**

Co-Directors: Dom Riley and Reyes Hiraldo

Musical Director: David Merriman

Lyric Adaptations: Tim Gilvin

Guitar: Lorenzo Magnarelli

Accordion: Laura Appeltshauser

Movement: Tiziana Silvestre

Lighting: Miles Fisher

Costumes: Clara Sancho-Arroyo

Make Up: Megan Longman

Stage Manager: Ryan Boey

Graphic Design: Elisa Ferreras

Production: Almudena Adalia, Tanja Raaste and Freddie Porter

## **THE COPLA SOLO**

**26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> September 2014 (2 Performances) – Collisions Festival**

**<https://youtu.be/5QupwPaF2og>**

**30<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2015 (2 Performances) – York Music Theatre Festival (UK):**

Performer: Alejandro Postigo  
Director: R.M. Sánchez-Camus  
Musical Arrangements: Jasmin Rodgman  
Musical Director / Piano: Kimon Pallikaropoulos  
Violin: Violeta García  
Lighting Design: Pablo Fernandez Baz  
Costume Design: Berthe Fortin  
Set Design: Roberta Vaz  
Graphic Design: Elisa Ferreras  
Production Assistant: Silvia Dumitriu

**21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016 (2 Performances) – Rosemary Branch Theatre (London, UK):**

**<https://youtu.be/Y92I GOLHDM>**

Performer: Alejandro Postigo  
Director: Fran Arráez  
Musical Director / Piano: Kimon Pallikaropoulos  
Violin: Violeta García  
Stage Manager: Sarah Button  
Lighting Design: Alex Ramsden  
Production: Alfred Taylor-Gaunt and Joel Fisher

**2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (4 Performances) – Barcelona Solo Festival (Spain).**

**Bilingual version: <https://youtu.be/TmBPluKykl>**

Performer: Alejandro Postigo  
Director: Tian Glasgow  
Stage Manager: Sarah Button  
Piano: Joseph Hall  
Violin: Violeta García

**23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017 (1 Performance) – FIT (Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia). Spanish version: <https://youtu.be/6G34Pk82Qw>**

Performer: Alejandro Postigo  
Director: Enrique Muñoz  
Piano: Ignacio Hellín  
Stage Manager: Nanci Tareco

**5<sup>th</sup> October 2017 (1 Performance) – ISTF DC (Stara Zagora, Bulgaria). Promo:**  
<https://youtu.be/lbIQeB7dhHU>

Performer: Alejandro Postigo  
Director: Enrique Muñoz  
Piano: Ignacio Hellín  
Violin: Violeta García  
Stage Managers: Laura Arnáiz and Laura Mateos

**5<sup>th</sup> November 2017 (1 Performance) – CENIT (Seville, Spain). Spanish version:**  
<https://youtu.be/txkh7337ipE>

Performer: Alejandro Postigo  
Director: Enrique Muñoz  
Piano: Kimon Pallikaropoulos  
Stage Manager: Laura Mateos

**14<sup>th</sup> December 2018 (2 Performances) – VIVA: <https://youtu.be/PRoRX-FaWV4>**

**15<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> April 2019 (6 Performances) – Tristan Bates Theatre (London):**

Performer: Alejandro Postigo  
Director: Tian Glasgow  
Piano: Kimon Pallikaropoulos  
Violin: Violeta García  
Stage Manager: Sarah Button

### **THE COPLA CABARET**

**30<sup>th</sup> September 2015 (1 Performance) – Collisions Festival:**  
[https://youtu.be/4BCOIUO\\_Q9I](https://youtu.be/4BCOIUO_Q9I)

**28<sup>th</sup> December 2017 (1 Performance) – Festival 150gr (Vitoria, Spain). Spanish version: <https://youtu.be/7Adv7nkBJxk>**

**7<sup>th</sup> April 2019 (1 Performance) – ISTF DC (Stara Zagora, Bulgaria)**

**28<sup>th</sup> May 2019 (1 Performance) – Plymouth (UK)**

**14<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (1 Performance) – PQ (Prague, Czech Republic)**

Performer: Alejandro Postigo  
Director: Andrea Jiménez  
Dramaturgy: Francesc Serra Vila  
Design: Maria José Martínez  
Musical Director / Piano: Kimon Pallikaropoulos  
Violin: Violeta García

## **APPENDIX B: SCRIPTS**

### **THE COPLA MUSICAL**

**A musical in two acts by Alejandro Postigo.**

#### **Characters:**

La Gitana (male transvestite)  
El Americano (her lover)  
Campanera (Republican comrade)  
Dolores (Republican leader)  
Jacinto (Republican comrade)  
National Band Soldier  
National Band Sergeant  
Father (of La Gitana)  
Mother (of La Gitana)  
Pincho (another transvestite)  
Mr Simon  
Doctor

#### **Casting Sugestions:**

Actor 1 to play Gitana  
Actor 2 to play El Americano  
Actor 3 to play Campanera  
Actor 4 to play Dolores/ Mother  
Actor 5 to play Jacinto/ Father/ Mr Simon  
Actor 6 to play Sergeant/ Doctor  
Actor 7 to play Soldier/ Pincho

#### **Music Numbers**

##### **Act 1**

- \* *Jailer of the Port*: La Gitana
- \* *Señor Firecraker*: El Americano and Ensemble
- \* *Tattoo*: La Gitana and El Americano (and The Republicans)
- \* *Republican Anthem*: Ensemble
- \* *You Owe Me a Kiss*: La Gitana, El Americano, Dolores and Jacinto
- \* *Campanera*: Gitana, Dolores, Jacinto and Campanera
- \* *Tell Me That You Love Me*: El Americano and La Gitana
- \* *Farewell España*: La Gitana, Campanera and Ensemble

##### **Act 2**

- \* *The Ritz Afternoons*: La Gitana and Mother
- \* *Life Can Be Lonely*: Pincho
- \* *But I Love You Anyway*: La Gitana
- \* *This I Swear to You*: El Americano and La Gitana
- \* *María de la O*: Campanera and Ensemble
- \* *The Fairly Paid*: El Americano
- \* *Sighs of Spain*: Campanera, La Gitana and Mother
- \* *Sorrow*: La Gitana and Ensemble

**ACT I: 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 1939, CÁDIZ, SPAIN.**

**SCENE 1: PRISON**

*Final stages of the Spanish Civil War. The National Band occupies most of the territory but there are still a few groups from the resistance fighting for freedom. A soldier from the National Band guards the cell of La Gitana in the Prison of Santa María. La Gitana, confined to her cell, is only connected to the outside world through her cell's little window.*

**SONG: Jailer of the Port**

**LA GITANA:** I'D RATHER DIE THAN GO ON LIVING,  
I'D RATHER DROWN THAN GO ON BREATHING.  
I'M WATCHING THE SHIPS SAIL GENTLY.  
I'M WATCHING THE WORLD ESCAPE ME BEHIND WALLS  
IN THE PORT SANTA MARÍA.

STRANGERS GUARD ME WHEN SLEEPING  
AND THEY ARE THE ONES TO BLAME  
FOR ALL OF THE WORLD COLLIDING,  
AND ALL OF THE LAND DIVIDING.

I'M WATCHING A LITTLE SAILBOAT GO SLOWLY ACROSS THE SEA.  
SOME SAY IT GOES TO AMERICA, OTHERS SAY IT COMES TO SHORE.  
I PRAY IT GOES TO AMERICA, BUT I'VE BEEN LET DOWN BEFORE,  
I'VE BEEN LET DOWN ONCE BEFORE.

AY, AY, AY, AY, AY, AY,  
A SWEET LITTLE SAILBOAT IS COMING TO CADIZ,  
IT'S COMING TO CADIZ, IT FLOATS THROUGH THE BAY.  
IT'S COMING TO CADIZ, IT FLOATS THROUGH THE BAY.  
BUT NOBODY SEES ME, BUT NOBODY SEES ME BEHIND WALLS  
IN THE PORT SANTA MARÍA.

*While La Gitana is singing, three Republicans have sneaked into prison. From a distance, Republican guerrilla Campanera challenges the soldier guarding the prison while her comrade Jacinto approaches from behind and tries to strangle him. Republican leader Dolores, from the front, takes the guard's rifle and covers his face with a cloth with the colours of the Republic (red, yellow and purple).*

JACINTO: Power to the Resistance!

*The soldier is forced against the wall and the Republicans free La Gitana from her captivity.*

CAMPANERA (to Gitana): Show me if you've learned how to hold a rifle.

*La Gitana grabs the rifle that Dolores is aiming towards the National soldier. While she has the opportunity to use the weapon, she can't fire.*

SOLDIER: You don't have what it takes to kill a man. You're not even a man.

*Republican Campanera approaches unseen by guard and hits him in the balls. Tension is momentarily released.*

CAMPANERA: Let's get out of here.

GITANA (to the guard): You were right: I not a man. I have never been. (*Enraged, kicks the soldier*).

DOLORES: Don't waste your rage.

JACINTO: There are still plenty of *falangistas* out there who deserve a good kick.

DOLORES: We need to get out of here.

GITANA: I think this corridor ends up on a rear entrance, by the port. The Nationals use it when they're

drunk or late for their shifts.

DOLORES: Let's go to Utopia.

CAMPANERA: Gitana, welcome back.

## **SCENE 2: THE PORT**

*Out of the prison of the National Band, La Gitana and the Republicans find themselves at the port, where the street market stands begin.*

JACINTO: I know where we are. This is where traders deliver merchandises. It's not far from Paca. But we will have to cross the market.

CAMPANERA: That is too risky. It will be full of *falangistas*.

DOLORES: We will see *falangistas* on every route. So we will try the market; it is always full with buyers.

GITANA: But look at me. I will catch their attention.

DOLORES: Put this coat on. Nothing too fancy, but you will make it to Utopia.

JACINTO: We should divide ourselves.

DOLORES: I'll take Gitana, you two will cross through *Muelle de Levante* and keep an eye on us.

JACINTO: What if there's trouble?

DOLORES: You come to the rescue. We need to get Gitana safe back to Utopia.

CAMPANERA: Such a plan...

*La Gitana and the Republicans start their separate journeys through the market. In their way, there is an American trader, announcing his merchandise brought from America. A high rank soldier is looking at the merchandise.*

AMERICANO: The most exquisite perfumes from America! Silk, cotton dresses, smoking pipes! Hey, Señor, I'm sure you have never smoked tobacco like this... What about a new razor, Sir?

*La Gitana and Dolores pass by the American's stand, trying to blend in with the crowd. La Gitana and the American trader face each other at one point and they recognise each other.*

AMERICANO: Wait a minute! Have we met?

*La Gitana freezes, Dolores tries to pull her, but she looks hypnotized.*

DOLORES: Vamos, Gitana.

*La Gitana reacts and moves. The American tries to stop her. The high rank soldier also catches Gitana's eye and approaches suspicious.*

SERGEANT: Anything the matter?

*Dolores looks at Jacinto, who approaches, takes the American pipe for sale, puts it in his bag and points at Campanera that runs away pulling the Soldier's attention.*

JACINTO: Catch the thief! *(to the American)* She stole your pipe, sir. Yes, the woman in old costumes, I saw her!

*Dolores and Gitana take the opportunity to keep moving.*

SERGEANT: Where did she go?

JACINTO: I saw her running towards *Muelle de Levante*.

SERGEANT: How did she look like?

JACINTO: I would say... mid 40s, short hair, poorly brushed, quite fat, I presume she won't get far.

SERGEANT: We'll make sure of that. *Alerta!* *(He goes looking for reinforcements)*.

JACINTO *(to the American who is still distracted)*: That was a very nice pipe, sir. I hope you will get it back.

AMERICANO: Yes... thanks. (*Getting back to his business attitude*). Actually, I think I have another very similar one that I can offer you for only "*cinco pesetas...*".

JACINTO: Well, I will need to ask my wife about that... (*staring at his list of merchandises*) Although she might prefer your "polylingual parrot".

AMERICANO: Well, I am currently out of stock on those...

JACINTO: Don't worry... But what kind of merchandises are you selling really?

**SONG: Señor Firecracker**

AMERICANO: FROM ACROSS THE BLUE ATLANTIC  
SAILED AN EX-CAR MECHANIC.  
SEÑOR FIRECRACKER, AMERICANO,  
SELLING THINGS FROM CHINOS TO CINZANOS.  
TRUCKING AND TRACKING, TRICKING AND TREKKING,  
ENJOYING WONDERFUL TAKINGS  
FROM SELLING BRIC-A-BRAC AND OLD NICK-NACKS.

OH, SEÑOR FIRECRACKER,  
WITH HIS CINNAMON AND NUTMEG  
EXOTIC SUGAR, GOLD LEAF, AND SILK THREAD,  
FINE ORNAMENTS OF ELEPHANT IVORY,  
FRESH COCONUTS FROM UNDER THE SHADE OF THE PALM TREES.

OH, SEÑOR FIRECRACKER,  
AND A MONKEY FROM GUYANA, FIREWORKS FROM CHINA,  
AND THEN FROM PERSIA: A POLYLINGUAL PARROT.  
AND EVEN, RARE EXOTIC DISEASES  
AND MEDICINES TO CURE AS HE PLEASES.

OH, SEÑOR FIRECRACKER,  
TRUCKING AND TRACKING, TRICKING AND TREKKING,  
ENJOYING WONDERFUL TAKINGS  
FROM SELLING BRIC-A-BRAC AND OLD NICK-NACKS.

SMUGGLED IN TO THE HISPANIC  
BY THIS EX-CAR MECHANIC  
A LITTLE UMBRELLA FOR WHEN IT'S RAINING,  
A LITTLE HIP-FLASK FOR WHEN YOU'RE ABSTAINING.  
HIKING AND HUPPING; LIQUOR FOR SUPPING,  
FRESH COFFEE BEANS FOR THE MORNING  
AND SILK PILLOWS TO LAY YOUR HEAD IN.

*Half way through The American's presentation of his merchandises, the National Soldier and Sergeant come and join. Jacinto is wary of them.*

**SCENE 3.A: UTOPIA**

DOLORES: That was close. What on earth happened to you?

GITANA: I knew him.

DOLORES: How is that even possible? I have never seen him in Cádiz and I've been around longer than you.

GITANA: I met him long ago, when I still wasn't La Gitana.

*Campanera arrives, suffocated.*

CAMPANERA: Next time I see Jacinto he is gonna bite the dust. Couldn't he think of anything better?

DOLORES: I guess, under pressure...

CAMPANERA: Sure, chase the little one. Anyway, it's good to have you back, Gitana.

GITANA: It's good to be back.

DOLORES: How did you get on?

GITANA: At first, the Nationals tried everything they could to get any information out of me, but they soon realized I was not really aware of any Republican plans. And how have things been at Utopia?

DOLORES: Not too bad. Paca used her contacts to get a license, and now we run it as a public cabaret. Every now and again there's an inspection, but the Nationals have never found anything other than costumes.

CAMPANERA: And now our star is back.

GITANA: I look nothing like a star.

DOLORES: We'll take care of that. There's a party tonight at Utopia to celebrate your comeback.

CAMPANERA: Your old gowns are still in the dressing rooms, waiting for you. You will sing for us, won't you?

DOLORES: We are expecting some comrades from Seville that will bring us news from the *maquis* of Ronda.

GITANA: So I wouldn't be surprised if some *Falangista* slips in.

DOLORES: Don't worry; once we transform you into the real Gitana, nobody will be able to recognize you.

CAMPANERA: What will you sing tonight? I've missed your songs.

GITANA: About an American with a tattoo... that I saw today, at the market.

DOLORES: Who's that man? I've never heard of him.

CAMPANERA: It's just a blast from the past. Gitana, that prison has made you hallucinate.

*La Gitana starts singing to Dolores and Campanera, while they start arranging the place and looking for her gowns.*

### **SONG: Tattoo**

**GITANA:** THROUGH THE MISTY WATER, CREEPING INTO HARBOUR  
A GIANT FOREIGN STEAMER BROUGHT HIM ONTO PORT.  
I FOUND HIM IN THE DOCKYARD, THE HEAT WAS SOFT, THE LIGHT, HARD.  
THE SEA WAS ALL THAT I HEARD LAPPING ON THE SHORE.

AND HIS HAIR WAS SOFTLY CARESSED BY THE BREEZES  
THAT RAN PAST HIS SUN-KISSED AND SEA-BEATEN SKIN.  
AND HIS VOICE WAS ACHING WITH A TONE THAT TEASES  
AND HIS ARM WAS BRANDED; PLACES HE HAD BEEN.  
IN FRONT OF TWO GLASSES OF LIQUOR  
IN SOME DARK, GOD-FORSAKEN BAR.  
HE SAT AND MUTTERED AND HE WHISPERED  
THE STORY OF HIS BROKEN HEART...

### **SCENE 3.B: THE PORT**

*(Continuation of the Tattoo song)*

**AMERICANO:** LOOK AT MY ARM, MY TATTOO:  
THE FADED LETTERS OF A NAME,  
A MEM'RY OF SOMEONE I KNEW,  
SOMEONE WHO SET MY HEART AFLAME.  
SHE LOVED ME FIRST, BUT NEVER WAITED,  
I WAITED BUT SHE NEVER CAME.  
AND NOW INSIDE MY ARM ARE BRAIDED  
THE FADED LETTERS OF HER NAME.

JACINTO: Tattoo and romance. I'll drink to that.

AMERICANO: Be my guest.

SOLDIER: This rum is really good. Where is it from?

AMERICANO: This, Gentlemen, comes all the way from the best liquor houses of Cuba, only for your delight.

SERGEANT: We should we get a bottle for the Captain. He might indulge some of today's calamities.

SOLDIER: Good idea. Let's get one for him and two for us. We don't get to try this very often. How much is it?

AMERICANO: I could arrange a price of 25 *pesetas* for all three bottles.

SOLDIER: That, Sir, is abusing the Falange.

AMERICANO: I'm afraid I didn't get it for less than that myself.

SERGEANT: I am sure you would like to support the Falange with a generous in-kind donation.

AMERICANO: Certainly, but...

SOLDIER: And probably we won't need to review your imports licensing.

SERGEANT: Considering, of course, that a Gentleman like you would have all paperwork in order.

AMERICANO: All things considered, I could probably offer you a further discount.

SERGEANT: A present like this would speak of your allegiance to the Falange and would facilitate further trading.

SOLDIER: We could put a word for him to Captain Segura, couldn't we?

SERGEANT: Certainly. I'm sure he will love this delight.

SOLDIER: And he will surely appreciate the kindness of a foreigner.

SERGEANT: Especially in these times where the world is so untrusting.

SOLDIER: When countries are at war.

SERGEANT: And immigrants need to go through extensive but necessary controls.

SOLDIER: So much hassle that could be easily avoided...

SERGEANT: Done then. I suggest we toast for Spain and its long-live international relations.

SOLDIER: And for our new friend and ally of the Falange.

JACINTO: Gentlemen, I'm afraid I will have to leave you now. My wife must be worried. I only came to buy some sardines for dinner and I have ended up spending all morning at the market.

SOLDIER: That's what happens when friends surround you. Time flies.

SERGEANT: So long, then. *¡Arriba España!*

SOLDIER AND JACINTO: *¡Arriba!*

*Jacinto leaves.*

AMERICANO: I'm afraid I need to wrap up as well. Gentlemen, I hope your Captain will enjoy my present. Good day.

SOLDIER: Good day to you, Sir.

*The American leaves following Jacinto's trace.*

SERGEANT: Something smells odd. Strange, this American business.

SOLDIER: At least he left the bottles. *¡Por España!*

SERGEANT: *Por España.*

### **SCENE 3.C: BACKSTAGE UTOPIA**

*La Gitana is trying her wigs and outfits when Dolores and Campanera enter her dressing room:*

DOLORES: Gitana, we need you to go on a mission.

GITANA: I hope you remember I am useless with violence.

DOLORES: We need your help. The Nationals know every one of us.

CAMPANERA: But they don't know you are back with us.

GITANA: What do you want me to do?

DOLORES: We need you to deliver a message. There is an armament supply arriving at dusk from Barcelona in a ship called The Minerva. The Captain of The Minerva expects a message by midnight. He will need to know where to deliver the new supplies.

GITANA: What will you do with those?

CAMPANERA: There is an uprising brewing. It's organized from Madrid. All Resistance groups over the country are warned and waiting for a signal.

DOLORES: Armaments are being delivered to all clandestine organizations throughout Spain and we'll get ours tonight.

GITANA: I don't think I'm right for the job.

DOLORES: You are our only hope. The Nationals are extremely vigilant. They know all of our names, our faces. But you've been out of the picture for very long...

GITANA: What if they find out?

CAMPANERA: Do you want to be hiding forever? Believe me; I know what you've been through. All Republicans are going through the same thing right now. We've been chased, damned, condemned to oblivion.

DOLORES: If Franco wins the war, there will be nothing left for us in Spain.

CAMPANERA: This is the only opportunity we have left to recuperate our lives, our country, our freedom.

DOLORES: And we need the armament. They took all of our rifles.

CAMPANERA: But we still have the passion, and ideals.

DOLORES: And most important of all, I know we are right, and victory will sit by the truth.

*Jacinto enters.*

JACINTO: I thought I would never get rid of them.

DOLORES: Where have you been all this time?

JACINTO: The Nationals wanted to have a drink. They ended up abusing that poor Yankee and stealing his rum.

CAMPANERA: You could have stolen some for the Republic.

JACINTO: We cannot waste any Resistance's efforts.

DOLORES: Who the hell is that American?

JACINTO: He is a trader, sells liquors and fancy things.

*Gitana looks intrigued. Campanera catches her eye and intervenes.*

CAMPANERA: Did he follow you?

JACINTO: I don't think we should worry about him. But we should worry about all the people that are already here. I've met some of the Seville comrades outside; they are all waiting for the party to start.

DOLORES: I'll make an announcement.

*Dolores leaves followed by Jacinto. Gitana stops him.*

GITANA: Jacinto, that American, did he...?

CAMPANERA: Gitana, wake up! Are you ready? People are waiting for you!

GITANA: Yes... I guess.

### **SCENE 3.D: STAGE UTOPIA**

*Dolores goes on stage to salute all comrades.*

DOLORES: Goodnight *camaradas*, friends of the Republic, welcome. We are going through some difficult times. The Nazis in Germany are strengthening their alliances and that means more difficulties for our Russian friends to support our cause. In Spain, the Nationals are also advancing their positions, but we are gathered here tonight to fight for our country, for our freedom. We are all ready to follow Madrid's instructions and we will wait together for tomorrow's uprising. Tomorrow the Republic will shine again over those forces that try to destroy what we have long worked for. But first, our comrade, friend and Utopia star La Gitana has been "released" from the oppression of the Falange. She will sing for us tonight, and tomorrow night, and the night after that, and from now on, nothing will shut the voice of the Republic. Welcome, Gitana.

### **SONG: *Tattoo* (Reprise)**

**GITANA:** IN THE COOL OF EVENING, I COULD SEE HIM LEAVING  
BACK ABOARD THE STEAMER THAT BROUGHT HIM TO MY SHORES.  
LEFT ON LAND BEHIND HIM STOOD A LITTLE GYPSY  
WILLING TO DELIVER KISSES TO HIS LIPS.  
SINCE THAT DAY I'VE WANDERED AND SEARCHED ALL THE DOCKYARD,  
NOT A SOUL HAS HEARD OF, OR ONCE SEEN HIS FACE.  
I SEARCHED EVERY MARKET, LOOKED IN EVERY TAVERN  
HOPING JUST FOR SOMETHING: JUST A LITTLE TRACE.  
I FEEL MY HEART IS GROWING SICKER,  
I'VE BEEN TO HALF THE PORTS OF SPAIN.  
AND I'LL TAKE ANY GLASS OF LIQUOR  
TO HELP ME SUFFOCATE MY PAIN.

*To Gitana's surprise, El Americano enters Utopia and joins her singing from the audience.*

**AMERICANO:** MY ARM STILL BEARS THIS TATTOO!  
YOUR NAME STILL BURNED BENEATH MY SKIN.  
MY MIND IS NEVER FAR FROM YOU,  
THAT'S WHY I BURNED YOUR MEM'RY IN.  
I'VE SAILED THE WORLD AND STILL I'VE WAITED.  
I'VE WAITED BUT I COULD NOT FIND.  
I SWORE TO SEARCH TILL MY LIGHT FADED  
TO QUENCH MY HEART AND SOOTHE MY MIND.

*The American and Gitana tango together and then Gitana, in shock, will run backstage.*

**Republicans:** (Spoken) What do you know of this sailor?  
Oh tell us, friend, of all you know.  
He was so strong and so mysterious.  
What is the story of his woe?  
(SUNG) THE PASSIONS FLAMED BUT NEVER WAITED,  
THE WAIT WAS PAINFUL ALL THE SAME.  
AND NOW INSIDE HIS ARM ARE BRAIDED  
THE FADED LETTERS OF HER NAME.

DOLORES: Who the hell is that man?

CAMPANERA: He comes from the past, from the days we were still not a Republic.

#### **SCENE 4: MEMORY AT THE PORT**

*We go back to 1931. A port.*

GITANA: Must you leave me?

AMERICANO: 1931 is not good for business in Spain. With this Republican Government I won't be able to trade as much as before.

GITANA: What do we care? I only want to be with you.

AMERICANO: Be reasonable. The US are recovering from the crash and I'll have a better chance to make money across the ocean. Once I make enough, I'll come back for you.

GITANA: I'm already missing you.

AMERICANO: You're beautiful. I promise I'll be back.

GITANA: A true Spanish kiss will be waiting for you.

*The ship makes a "last call sound". The American must go in. Gitana looks around. They embrace. A man approaches furiously towards them, followed by a woman trying to keep up with his pace.*

FATHER: *Maricón!*

GITANA: Now go!

AMERICANO: Take care.

GITANA: I'll be waiting for you!

*La Gitana has no time to finish her reply; her father has grabbed her and hit her in the face. La Gitana falls to the floor and her father keeps hitting and kicking her repeatedly.*

FATHER: How do you dare to shame your family like this!

MOTHER: Ramiro, please, calm down.

FATHER: Shut up! This is all your fault, you spoilt him.

*The father hits the mother, who's trying to stand between Gitana and her husband.*

GITANA: Father, I can explain.

FATHER: Shut up! I don't wanna hear you. I've seen enough.

*The father keeps hitting Gitana.*

MOTHER: Ramiro, stop! Please!

FATHER: Did you steal your mother's scarf? Don't you care about us?

GITANA: Father, please.

FATHER: I said enough! Haven't I taught you anything? I am going to give you a lesson that you will never forget.

MOTHER: Ramiro, you will kill him!

FATHER: What have I done to you? Do you hate us that much?

MOTHER: Ramiro, stop!!!

FATHER: Answer me! Do you hate me that much?

*The father is holding Gitana, which bleeds on the floor while the mother tries to make him stop. A woman runs towards them and stands between Gitana and her father before he manages to hit a final strike.*

CAMPANERA: STOP!

FATHER: Get out of my way.

CAMPANERA: You will have to hit me first.

FATHER: Mean your own business, you *roja*.

CAMPANERA: This country is red today, and a number of Republicans are marching this way. I can assure they will not like what I see.

*In the background, we start hearing a chorus of people advancing in this direction.*

MOTHER: Let's go home, Ramiro.

FATHER: This is not finished. *(To Gitana)* You and I will continue this conversation at home.

MOTHER: Come on, let's go now.

FATHER: And you, I'll remember your face.

*Father and mother leave. Campanera kneels by an almost destroyed Gitana.*

CAMPANERA: Don't move, *criatura*. I will take you to *Casa de Socorro*.

GITANA: Not there. He will know.

CAMPANERA: You're bleeding. Do you have anywhere to go?

GITANA: No.

CAMPANERA: I'll take care of you. You can stay with some comrades in Utopia for a few days. *(Gitana looks inquisitive)* It's the name of our club.

GITANA: My father won't like it.

CAMPANERA: From now on, it doesn't matter what he likes. Tonight, a new Spain is rising for everyone. It is the end of all dictatorship. This new Spain is called the Republic. Can you hear it?

*A number of Republicans waving their flag and lead by Dolores walk proudly singing the Republican Anthem. Campanera helps La Gitana stand and they both join in.*

**SONG: Republican Anthem**

REPUBLICANS: COME, HEAR US SOLDIERS SINGING, THE HEAVENS WILL AMPLIFY.  
COME HEAR BELLS RINGING FOR JUSTICE, SPAIN'S CHILDREN THEY GLORIFY.  
OUR COUNTRY, SHE'S CALLING. WE ANSWER WITH PROMISE  
TO FIGHT AND TO CONQUER OR BESTOW OUR BLOOD TO HER SOIL.

THERE'S FURY IN OUR HEARTBEATS AND GLORY LYING IN WAIT.  
WE SING IN EXALTATION FOR VICTORY WILL BE OUR FATE.

THE SUN IS SLOWLY RISING TO SHED LIGHT ON THIS DAY.  
THE LAND WARMS UP FOR THE BATTLE, SPANISH FIRES ARE BLAZING AWAY.  
WITH COURAGE, WE'RE WAITING THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM.  
OUR NATION PREPARING, MAY GOD WATCH AND DEFEND US ALL.

THERE'S FURY IN OUR HEARTBEATS AND GLORY LYING IN WAIT.  
WE SING IN EXALTATION FOR VICTORY WILL BE OUR FATE.

OUR BREATHING EVER DEEPER, WE HOST THE FLAGS ONCE MORE.  
THE WINDS WILL BLOW THIS EMBLEM AND GUIDE US TODAY IN THIS WAR.  
WE'RE WRATHFUL, WE'RE READY, WE'LL WIPE THE SWEAT FROM OUR BROW,  
WE'LL TAKE BACK OUR FUTURE FOR LIBERTY BECKONS US NOW.

THERE'S FURY IN OUR HEARTBEATS AND GLORY LYING IN WAIT.  
WE SING IN EXALTATION FOR VICTORY WILL BE OUR FATE.

**SCENE 5: BACKSTAGE/ STAGE UTOPIA**

*Back in 1939, Gitana is changing clothes in her old changing room in Utopia. Americano enters.*

AMERICANO: Hello.

GITANA: You can't come in here.

AMERICANO: Are you shy now?

GITANA: This is my dressing room. Please leave.

AMERICANO: Aren't you happy to see me?

GITANA: Who are you anyway?

AMERICANO: Stop playing, you know perfectly who I am.

GITANA: I don't.

AMERICANO: Then why did you sing about me?

GITANA: I didn't.

AMERICANO: Don't be scared

GITANA: I'm not.

AMERICANO: It doesn't look that way.

GITANA: You can't be real.

AMERICANO: Touch me.

GITANA: I can't. I must leave... and you must too.

AMERICANO: Come on, touch me.

*He gets on her way. She touches his face.*

GITANA: I almost forgot about you.

AMERICANO: I don't believe you. I've thought about you everyday since we parted.

GITANA: I don't believe you either. And now let me go.

AMERICANO: First we have some business pending.

GITANA: I don't remember any business.

AMERICANO: You owe me a kiss.

GITANA: What nonsense?

AMERICANO: A true Spanish kiss, remember? You promised, at the port.

**SONG: *You Owe Me a Kiss***

**AMERICANO:** YOU HAVE GOT A LITTLE DEBT THAT OUGHT TO BE REPAID.

**GITANA:** WELL, JUST TELL ME WHAT I OWE, I'LL PAY YOU RIGHT AWAY.

**AMERICANO:** YOU WON'T WANT TO PAY, THOUGH I'LL BE HAPPY TO RECEIVE.

**GITANA:** COME ON AND TELL ME; WHAT DO I OWE YOU? OR SHOULD I JUST TURN AND LEAVE.

**AMERICANO:** YOU OWE ME A KISS, DEAR. OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?

YOU OWE ME A KISS, DEAR; I LONG TO BE PAID.

**GITANA:** WHAT RUBBISH IS THIS, DEAR? A KISS ISN'T BOUGHT AND YOU'LL HAVE TO CONVINCE ME TO GIVE ONE AWAY.

**AMERICANO:** YOU OWE ME A KISS! AND YOU CANNOT DENY IT.

**GITANA:** BUT YOU CANNOT BUY IT, SO YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT.

*Gitana and Americano move to main space Utopia during their song, finding Dolores and Jacinto arguing by the bar.*

JACINTO: Come on, Dolores, you said we'd sealed our victory with a Republican kiss.

DOLORES: There is no victory just yet, and this is no time to celebrate.

JACINTO: Pleaaassee, the right encouragement could lead a man to conquer every battle.

**DOLORES:** YOU WOULD NOT DEMAND IT IF IT WAS WHAT YOU DESERVED.  
**JACINTO:** I AM NOT DEMANDING, I'M JUST CLAIMING WHAT'S RESERVED.  
**DOLORES:** ONLY GENTLEMANLY ACTS COULD MAKE ME VOLUNTEER.  
**JACINTO:** ARE YOU EMBARRASSED, THAT I MIGHT EMBRACE YOU? WELL, I COULD JUST LEAVE YOU HERE...

**AMERICANO / JACINTO:** YOU OWE ME A KISS, DEAR. OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?  
YOU OWE ME A KISS, DEAR; I LONG TO BE PAID.  
**GITANA / DOLORES:** WHAT RUBBISH IS THIS, DEAR? A KISS ISN'T BOUGHT AND YOU'LL HAVE TO CONVINCE ME TO GIVE ONE AWAY.  
**AMERICANO / JACINTO:** YOU OWE ME A KISS AND YOU CANNOT DENY IT!  
**GITANA / DOLORES:** BUT YOU CANNOT BUY IT, SO YOU'LL HAVE TO WAIT.

*Campanera appears and takes Gitana back into the dressing room.*

CAMPANERA: Enough flirting for tonight. Goodbye,Americano.

*Campanera shuts the door of Gitana's dressing room onAmericano's face. Gitana is amused, Campanera tries to calm her down.*

GITANA:Americano... I like that.

CAMPANERA: Who's that man?

GITANA: The man at the market, the man at the port years ago... you were there, remember?

CAMPANERA: For God's sake, Gitana! You should be focused now!

GITANA: I am, don't worry. We will get our Republic back.

CAMPANERA: Yes, we will. But first we need to fight.

GITANA: Campanera, what will you do when the war is over?

CAMPANERA: I don't know... I've been fighting for so long that I can no longer imagine a life without the Resistance. Along these years, it has become my only life. But once it is over... I'd like to start a business, a bar... or maybe run Utopia.

GITANA: I could do the entertainment.

CAMPANERA: Once the Nationals are out of the way.

GITANA: We will plan parties and events.

CAMPANERA: Sounds good. But first things first. I've come here to give you this (*offers her a gun*).

GITANA: What? No, Campanera.

CAMPANERA: This is not a game. You might need to use it.

GITANA: I know my way to the port; no one will stop me.

CAMPANERA: Take it with you. The Nationals are everywhere. It's best to be safe.

GITANA: It's so heavy.

CAMPANERA: It's about time you learn how to use one.

GITANA: I'm scared.

CAMPANERA: Don't be. That's their chance of getting you. (*Pause*) Come on, we will laugh about this tomorrow.

GITANA: Promise me we will.

CAMPANERA: I promise.

*Gitana puts a cape on and exits.*

## **SCENE 6: THE PORT**

*Gitana walks down the port in disguise and the Sergeant enters behind her.*

SERGEANT: Alto! (*Gitana stops*). Hands up! Where are you going? Come on, answer me!

GITANA: I... I'm going to meet a man... a client.

SERGEANT: Who are you? What... client? (*Gitana pulls up her cape to show her legs*). I see. Turn around. Come on, turn around! (*the Sergeant approaches Gitana, whose face is slightly covered*). Your client won't mind a little waiting.

GITANA: Oh, I shouldn't make him wait.

SERGEANT: What's your name? Come on, what's your name?

GITANA: ...Imperio.

SERGEANT: I like you, Imperio. Do you like me?

GITANA: It's my job to like men.

SERGEANT: Then you surely won't mind sparing a little time to service your country.

GITANA: I... I can be back.

SERGEANT: Come on, what's your price? The Falange is willing to pay for whatever is worth. I'll pay twice your normal rate. (*He grabs her from behind, she reaches for her gun, The American appears*).

AMERICANO: You're late, Imperio. You said you'd meet me an hour ago!

SERGEANT: So, that's your client? You seem to appear wherever there's good business, Americano. (*The Sergeant lets go of Gitana and she releases her hand from the gun*).

AMERICANO: Nice to see you again, Sergeant.

SERGEANT: The faithful ally of the Falange, you left us in such a hurry.

AMERICANO: Business is business, sir.

SERGEANT: Certainly. And since we're talking business, won't you have some of that heavenly water left? Our captain really enjoyed it.

AMERICANO: Not with me, I'm afraid.

SERGEANT: Of course, I see you have other businesses to attend.

AMERICANO: Imperio is my favourite business in Cádiz.

SERGEANT: You have such a refined taste; I must certainly give her a try.

AMERICANO: Not tonight, though. I have made special plans; she can be all yours tomorrow.

GITANA: I want to think I'll have something to say in this business negotiation.

SERGEANT: Certainly, *Señorita*. You put the price and the place.

GITANA: What about the headquarters in exchange for your wife's wedding ring?

SERGEANT: (*amused*) You're such trouble, Miss.

AMERICANO: She's worth all the trouble, though.

SERGEANT: In that case, enjoy your trouble tonight, Americano. And don't take long in the port. The Republicans are too quiet and that means real trouble.

AMERICANO: Not to worry, Sergeant. We're on our way now.

SERGEANT: Nice to meet you, Imperio. I'm craving for my share tomorrow (*he slaps her ass*).

GITANA: I know where to find you, *Sargento*.

*The Soldier approaches fast holding Campanera prisoner.*

SERGEANT: Talking about trouble...

SOLDIER: Here she is, Sergeant. She's the one we've been looking for so long. I've overheard about an operation carried by a spy named La Gitana, but she won't speak. Should we take her to the Captain?

SERGEANT: Even better, we'll do the work for him.

CAMPANERA: You will try until daylight.

SOLDIER: I swear she's a tough one.

SERGEANT: She won't be in a minute. *(To Campanera)* I know you. You're the famous Campanera, right? Tell me, who is La Gitana?

CAMPANERA: I also know you. You are the son of a Republican. I remember you. You reported your own father to the Nationals during the uprising of Primo de Rivera. You gave him away to escape the firing line. I was there. It was a sad day for the Republicans, but the saddest day for you. You lost your principles, your friends...

SERGEANT: *(getting nervous)* Stop talking nonsense, red bitch, you Republicans are such sentimentalists. That is enough. *(Losing his temper)* Who is La Gitana?

CAMPANERA: You're just a liar, a traitor, and you will die in hell, alone, and then you will remember your father, who you pushed to death like a dog and will never stand to his name.

SERGEANT: Very well. You've been looking for this.

*SERGEANT aims her rifle to Campanera. Gitana tried to catch Campanera's eye.*

GITANA: Sergeant, I'm sure I can make her talk. Women have their ways to... *(the Sergeant pushes Gitana).*

SERGEANT: Soldier, move away from her.

SOLDIER: Sergeant, the Captain wouldn't authorize this!

SERGEANT: He will never know, now move!!

CAMPANERA: Traitor! Worse than a dog, scum! Full of lies, full of shame!

AMERICANO: Please, Sergeant, I'm sure we don't need a blood scene in here.

SERGEANT: Take Imperio away, you should have been gone already.

AMERICANO: Listen, Sergeant...

SERGEANT: *(out of himself)* Do you want to be the next ones? Move!!

*Americano drags Gitana away. The Soldier also moves away.*

CAMPANERA: *Viva la República!!!!*

*SERGEANT kills Campanera by gunfire.*

SERGEANT: Now she won't be able to speak.

GITANA: Campanera, Campanera! *(Gitana runs to her dead body).*

SERGEANT: Did you know her, who are you?? Answer me!!

*Gitana takes out her gun and kills the Sergeant out of rage. Then she points at the Soldier who, scared, runs away. Americano, who has been observing the situation then approaches Gitana, away from Campanera's dead body.*

AMERICANO: We need to get out of here before is too late. But you'll need to tell me: who are you... and who was Campanera?

GITANA: They call me La Gitana. And she... she was the heart of the Republic. It all began in 1938, on one of those rare rainy nights that Cádiz sees every so often.

## **SCENE 7: 1938, UTOPIA (MEMORY 2)**

*Back to early 1938. Dolores and Jacinto await the return of Campanera on a quiet night.*

DOLORES: It's past midnight and Campanera's still not here.

JACINTO: Don't worry, Dolores. Maybe she missed the bus from Ubrique.

DOLORES: She's never been this late before.

JACINTO: She's never been this far either.

DOLORES: I don't know, Jacinto. This last month the situation has become very delicate.

JACINTO: Tell me about it. The Nationals are everywhere.

DOLORES: Cádiz has been occupied for two years... even Utopia is clandestine now!

JACINTO: So why should we worry? Now we can plan without the company of the Falange.

DOLORES: At this pace it won't take long before the Nationals find us again.

JACINTO: They wouldn't see that we are in front of their eyes, at the heart of Cádiz.

DOLORES: Ay, *no sé* Jacinto... This is all getting too dangerous. The rear entrance is becoming too transited; we should be more discreet.

JACINTO: Dolores, we cannot make everybody enter through Paca España's flat. She could get anxious and give us up.

DOLORES: Paca would never do that.

*Gitana arrives.*

DOLORES: Where do you think you are going dressed like that?

GITANA: I thought we were going to celebrate.

JACINTO: Don't you see the Nationals are now everywhere?

GITANA: I know. The streets were full of soldiers.

DOLORES: Did anyone follow you?

GITANA: I think so, two men. But I entered '*La Jimena*' to lose them.

DOLORES: Jacinto, this doesn't sound good at all. The Nationals reinforcing, surveying the streets, following us...

GITANA: Y Campanera?

DOLORES: Campanera should have been here hours ago. I'm very worried, Gitana.

GITANA: Should we go look for her?

JACINTO: God, no! We will wait here patiently for the rest of the night until she comes back.

DOLORES: What if she doesn't?

JACINTO: Do not despair, Dolores. It won't help us.

DOLORES: I don't know what to think.

GITANA: You don't need to worry about Campanera. She's a survivor.

DOLORES: I know she is. But she is tempting luck.

GITANA: Do you remember when they arrested Paulino and she stood between him and the rifle?

JACINTO: Everybody spoke about that for weeks.

DOLORES: She is a crazy one, all right.

JACINTO: This girl always wanted to be centre of attention.

DOLORES: She's not afraid of anything.

GITANA: She's the fairest woman I have ever known.

JACINTO: She holds our banner with pride.

DOLORES: She is the Resistance.

*Gitana, Dolores and Jacinto sing to Campanera, who enters during the second verse of the song to join them until the end.*

**SONG: Campanera**

**GITANA:** WHY ARE YOUR EYES LINED WITH CIRCLES  
JUST LIKE AN IRIS IN BLOOM?  
WHAT IS THIS OUTFIT YOU'RE WEARING?  
AY CAMPANERA, WHAT DID YOU DO?

**JACINTO:** ALL THOSE WHO THINK THAT THEY KNOW YOU,  
WELL, THEY KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE TRUTH.  
**DOLORES:** THEY SAY THAT YOU'RE A TRAITOR  
BUT ALL YOU ARE, IF THEY LOOK HARD, IS FULL OF YOUTH.

**JACINTO:** TELL THEM TO STOP SPINNING STORIES.  
**GITANA:** STOP THEM FROM GROWING AND FROM SPREADING ALL AROUND YOU.  
**DOLORES:** BECAUSE THEY KNOW HOW THE TALE GOES  
THEY'LL SEARCH AROUND AND HUNT YOU DOWN UNTIL THEY'VE FOUND YOU.

**ALL:** AY, CAMPANERA!  
**JACINTO:** HOW COULD A PERSON BE FAIRER?  
**ALL:** NO-ONE CAN ACCEPT IT SO WE'LL SING HER PRAISES  
RAISE YOUR GLASS TO CAMPANERA.  
**JACINTO:** WHY DO THE PEOPLE START STARING THE MOMENT SHE PASSES BY?  
**DOLORES:** THEY SEE SHE'S REACHING FOR FREEDOM,  
SHE'S LIKE A SKYLARK LEARNING TO FLY.

**GITANA:** SHE LONGS TO GO TO THE MOUNTAINS TO MEET HER LOVER, WHO'S ON THE RUN.  
**JACINTO:** SHE WAITS UNTIL THE WATCH ENDS  
**DOLORES:** THEN SHE SLIPS OFF TO TRADE HIS FLOWERS FOR HER GUN.

**GITANA:** THEIR LOVE IS PURE, THEY ARE YEARNING,  
NOT EVEN WAR CAN SEPARATE THEM ANY LONGER.  
THEIR LOVE IS FIRE, THEY ARE BURNING,  
**CAMPANERA:** THE CRUEL GOSSIP OF THE TOWN JUST MADE IT STRONGER.

**ALL:** AY, CAMPANERA!  
**CAMPANERA:** NONE OF THE PEOPLE BELIEVED IT.  
**ALL:** NO-ONE CAN ACCEPT IT SO WE'LL SING HER PRAISES  
RAISE YOUR GLASS TO CAMPANERA.  
**CAMPANERA:** TELL THEM TO STOP SPINNING STORIES,  
STOP THEM FROM GROWING AND FROM SPREADING ALL AROUND YOU.  
BECAUSE THEY KNOW HOW THE TALE GOES  
THEY'LL SEARCH AROUND AND HUNT YOU DOWN UNTIL THEY'VE FOUND YOU.

**ALL:** AY, CAMPANERA! HOW COULD A PERSON BE FAIRER?  
NOONE CAN ACCEPT IT SO WE'LL SING HER PRAISES,  
RAISE YOUR GLASS TO CAMPANERA.

**DOLORES:** We were so worried about you!

**CAMPANERA:** It took me a long time to come down from the mountains. There were *falangistas* everywhere. But some comrades from Seville helped me hide and cross the provincial borders.

**JACINTO:** Did you manage to deliver the rifles?

**CAMPANERA:** With the help of Miguelito and other comrades that joined the maquis.

**DOLORES:** What is their plan of attack?

**CAMPANERA:** They have a very strong position. They are planning to catch a group of Nationals in Ronda that would let them advance a couple of villages.

**JACINTO:** And what do they suggest we do?

**CAMPANERA:** They want us to take care of the port. Cádiz is still the strongest position to receive help

from our foreign allies via sea. But I'll tell you all of our plans in a minute.

GITANA: You must be exhausted. Do you want to drink something?

CAMPANERA: A glass of *tinto* should uplift my spirit.

GITANA: Did you see Paulino?

CAMPANERA: Well, I guess that was the other reason why I got a bit delayed.

GITANA: How did you find him?

CAMPANERA: He looks thin but keeps fit. The mountains do him good.

GITANA: Very soon you won't have to hide in the mountains to see him.

CAMPANERA: Very soon.

DOLORES: We still have a long way to go, but I'm happy to see us all together again.

JACINTO: And in one piece.

CAMPANERA: Gitana, I have news about your father. He died by the hands of some comrades trying to defend the position of the *maquis*. Your father got too close, and he was armed. They couldn't but shoot. I'm sorry.

GITANA: You couldn't help it. He was a *falangista*.

DOLORES: But he was your father. Rest in peace.

JACINTO: This war is going to kill us all.

DOLORES: It won't. And now let's toast. For Campanera! And for all of us toasting again at the end of this war.

CAMPANERA: *Viva la República!*

All: *Viva!*

<i>Si los curas y frailes supieran, la paliza que les van a dar, subirían al coro cantando:  "¡Libertad, libertad, libertad!"</i>	If priests and monks knew; the beating they're going to receive, they'd go up to the choir singing:  "Liberty, liberty, liberty!"
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*A group of National Guards hiding outside Utopia break into the club with a rifle.*

SOLDIER: So you think you can hide in this shit-hole and that we would never find you? Hands up, everyone!

JACINTO: This is a family gathering, we are doing nothing illegal.

*The guard hits Jacinto in the head with the rear of the rifle. Jacinto loses consciousness.*

DOLORES: Jacinto!!

SOLDIER: From now on, you'll only speak when I ask you.

*La Gitana, Dolores and Campanera stand disarmed with their hands up while Jacinto lays unconscious on the floor.*

SOLDIER: He just got what he deserved. And you know why? Because he lied to me. And you can't lie to your authorities.

CAMPANERA: You are no authority to us.

SOLDIER: Do you want to be the next one, *roja*? Cádiz belongs to the Falange now, so forget your fairy tales and accept reality once and for all. I'm going to make your lives quite simple. We know the Republicans' plans. I just want to know which one of you is Campanera.

CAMPANERA: Fuck off.

SOLDIER: We have a fighting cock here.

*The guard approaches Campanera, grabs her by the face almost strangling her.*

SOLDIER: Is it you, the mythical Campanera? (*Campanera remains silent*). The one that goes hiding in the mountains to get fucked? Can't you find a real man in town? I'm here to help you. (*He kisses Campanera in the mouth. She spits on the guard*). Who do you think you are, bitch? Campanera or not, you're going to pay for this.

SERGEANT: Hold your horses! We came here to get Campanera. This is all we care about. If you cooperate, the rest of you can remain here as if nothing happened and we'll just have a friendly talk with Campanera at the headquarters of the Falange. Just a few questions, nothing more.

SOLDIER: So, once and for all, which one of you bitches is Campanera?

CAMPANERA: We won't tell you... never!!

SOLDIER: This bitch really likes trouble. Get your shirt off.

CAMPANERA: You will have to rip it yourself, bastard.

SOLDIER: It will be my pleasure.

*Gitana and Dolores run to protect Campanera.*

SERGEANT: Stay right there the two of you. Your friend is looking for fun, and she will get it... unless you tell me who the fuck is Campanera...

CAMPANERA: Campanera is not here.

SERGEANT: Very well.

*The first soldier has ripped off Campanera's shirt and he starts touching and abusing her. Campanera cries out of pain.*

SERGEANT: Now can you tell me who of you fuckers is Campanera?

CAMPANERA: Over my dead body.

SERGEANT: Maybe your friends will. (*Gitana and Dolores empathize*).

CAMPANERA: No!!

SOLDIER: Why don't we take the three of them, Sergeant?

SERGEANT: That'd be too much of a fuss. Remember what the captain said. Plus I'm having fun with this game. Let's get another round.

*The soldiers keep torturing Campanera and it's becoming more and more unbearable, to the point they are ready to rape her.*

SERGEANT: Once and for all, who is Campanera?

CAMPANERA: You can die in hell.

SERGEANT: You were looking for this.

*The soldier is ready to rape Campanera with the rifle, when Gitana cries:*

GITANA: Stop!! I am Campanera. (*Silence*).

SERGEANT: Good. We begin to understand. A few minutes ago, a friend's torture could have been avoided. And they say that the *falangistas* are not empathetic. Now I just need to make sure that you are the real Campanera.

GITANA: What do you want me to do?

SERGEANT: Nothing. The Nationals don't ask for much. We just want confirmation from your friends.

CAMPANERA: You will never get a word out of us.

SERGEANT: Very well. Then we'll play the same game with the new Campanera.

*SOLDIER grabs a terrorized Gitana.*

DOLORES: That won't be necessary. The woman that you are holding is Campanera.

SERGEANT: Very well, finally! It looks like the Republicans are not as stupid as one would figure. And

you, what do you say, *zorrita* (to Campanera)?

*Campanera, in tears, looks away.*

SERGEANT: Rip off her shirt.

CAMPANERA: No!!

SERGEANT: Do you want to share something with us?

*Campanera cries.*

SERGEANT: Come on, it won't be hard. You just need to answer one question. What is the name of your friend?

*Campanera keeps crying.*

SERGEANT: I can't hear you. Let me help you speak (*They lift Gitana's skirt with the intention to rape her*).

CAMPANERA: Cam...pa...ne...ra.

SERGEANT: What did you just say? (*He holds Campanera by her hair*).

CAMPANERA: (*In tears*) Campanera.

SERGEANT: That's what I thought. Very well, end of the game.

SOLDIER: What if they are lying, Sergeant?

SERGEANT: They wouldn't be that stupid. We need to ask Campanera a couple of questions that only she will be able to answer. And if she doesn't, we will have to kill her. They wouldn't want to see their friend die. It's been a pleasure talking to you today.

*The Sergeant leaves escorting La Gitana outside.*

SOLDIER: If you want my advice, I would think of something more useful than playing Mata-Hari and leave this city to the National Band. As for this dump, from today it is declared private space for the Falange. Have a nice day, ladies (and gentleman).

*The Soldier takes Utopia's Republican flag and exits. Campanera is left half naked bleeding on the floor, and once they're left, Dolores runs to comfort her as well as Jacinto that slightly wakes up from the commotion he has suffered.*

## **SCENE 8: INN'S ROOM**

*Back in the present (1939), La Gitana finishes the narration of her memory for El Americano.*

AMERICANO: What happened afterwards?

GITANA: They undressed me at headquarters, and found a male body. First they wanted to cut my genitals, later I became their clown.

AMERICANO: But what happened when they learnt you were not Campanera?

GITANA: They never learnt that. What they learnt was that I was the son of the deceased Capitán Ramiro Molina. And for respect to his widow, my mother, they decided to let me live. I became a shadow in Santa María. From my cell's little window, I watched the ships arrive and leave the port. Sometimes I wondered if you'd sail in one of them. Until this morning, when I was released... and it all started again.

AMERICANO: You are safe here.

GITANA: In Spain, nobody is safe anywhere anymore.

AMERICANO: Today was a very long day. Rest a while. Tomorrow we'll see things in a different light.

*La Gitana falls sleep in the arms of her American. The following morning, The American wakes up in the room where he and Gitana fell asleep the night before. There's noise coming from the streets. He turns on the radio transistor while Gitana wakes up:*

**Radio:** Last night, in the Port Santa María, the National Band intercepted a ship coming from Barcelona called The Minerva. It was full of armament supplies for the Republican Resistance. The Captain of The

Minerva was captured and confessed the destination of that armament, a Republican squat known as Utopia. A Republican undercover operation coordinated from Madrid was dismantled by the National Band, which has proudly announced the end of the war. The leader of the Falange, General Francisco Franco has declared: "*En el día de hoy, cautivo y desarmado el Ejército rojo, han alcanzado las tropas Nacionales sus últimos objetivos militares. LA GUERRA HA TERMINADO*".

AMERICANO: I can't believe my ears. The war is over!

GITANA: What have I done...?

AMERICANO: Gitana, the war is over!

GITANA: I need to go find Dolores.

AMERICANO: Wait a minute, you can't go anywhere like that. The Nationals will be looking for you.

GITANA: Don't you understand? I should have warned the Captain of The Minerva! This is my entire fault!

AMERICANO: You are not to blame. There was nothing you could do about it.

GITANA: We should have never found each other again.

AMERICANO: You don't really mean that, do you?

GITANA:Americano, this is not about us! It is about my friends, my country... about people losing their hopes.

AMERICANO: There is no use in regretting what can't be changed. We need to think about the future.

GITANA: What future? Spain will see no future now.

AMERICANO: Then come with me to America.

GITANA: Stop this foolishness. You don't even know me. You don't know who I am.

AMERICANO: I know I love you. I came back looking for you, and this time I won't leave without you.

GITANA: This should have never happened.

AMERICANO: You love me too. At least acknowledge that.

GITANA: I need to go and find Dolores.

AMERICANO: Forget this nonsense. Your friends have lost the war, Gitana. Now move on! Come with me to America. I will make you a star! I have some contacts. We will be wealthy, we will be happy. Trust me, I believe in you. And I love you.

GITANA:Americano, please.

AMERICANO: You love me too. Tell me that you love me.

GITANA: We shouldn't have found each other again.

**SONG: *Tell Me that You Love Me***

**AMERICANO:** IF YOU EVER ASKED ME TO WALK THROUGH THE DESERT,  
WELL, I WOULD WALK BARE-FOOT WITHOUT HESITATION.  
IF YOU EVER ASKED ME TO CUT MY VEINS OPEN  
I'D BLEED OUT A RIVER OF THE REDDEST CARNATION.  
IF YOU EVER ASKED ME TO BURN IN A FIRE  
I'D BURN LIKE A FOREST; A GLORIOUS CREMATION.  
FOR I AM A SLAVE TO YOUR GRACE AND YOUR BEAUTY;  
AND YOU ARE THE QUEEN OF MY BODY, MY LIFE.  
AND EVEN THOUGH ALL THIS IS ALL I CAN GIVE,  
I MUST ASK ONE FAVOUR, IF I AM TO LIVE.

TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD.  
DON'T WORRY 'BOUT LYING, OR NOT BEING TRUTHFUL,

JUST GIVE ME THE WORDS. JUST GIVE ME THEM SOFTLY,  
THOSE WORDS ARE THE ONLY WORDS I WANT TO HEAR.  
A SINGLE "I LOVE YOU" WILL BE - TO MY SORROW -  
AS RAIN IS TO DESERTS IN APRIL AND MAY.  
OH WON'T YOU TAKE PITY ON MY TREMBLING HEART:  
TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME!  
TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD!

**GITANA:** IF I COULD NOT LOOK INTO YOUR ALMOND EYES THEN  
THE PULSE IN MY TEMPLES WOULD SUDDENLY CEASE.  
IF I COULD NOT SAVOUR YOUR SWEET SILVER KISSES  
MY LIPS WOULD DRY UP, BLEEDING, CRACKED AND IN PIECES.  
IF I COULD NOT LIE IN YOUR STRONG, SUN-BROWN ARMS  
THEN MINE WOULD LIE CROSSED ON MY CHEST, AND AT PEACE.  
I KNOW THAT IF I COULDN'T HOLD YOU AND BE HELD  
MY MIND WOULD SOON FRACTURE AND MADNESS WOULD TAKE HOLD.  
YOU DO HAVE THE POWER, TO BRING DAY FROM NIGHT,  
BRING LIFE OUT OF NOTHING, BY HOLDING ME TIGHT.

**AMERICANO/GITANA:** TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD.  
DON'T WORRY 'BOUT LYING, OR NOT BEING TRUTHFUL,  
JUST GIVE ME THE WORDS. JUST GIVE ME THEM SOFTLY,  
THOSE WORDS ARE THE ONLY WORDS I WANT TO HEAR.  
A SINGLE "I LOVE YOU" WILL BE - TO MY SORROW -  
AS RAIN IS TO DESERTS IN APRIL AND MAY.  
OH WON'T YOU TAKE PITY ON MY TREMBLING HEART:  
TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME!  
TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD!

AMERICANO: Come with me to America. I'll make you a star. In America: the land of opportunity, the land of freedom.

GITANA: I can't leave my comrades like this.

AMERICANO: In America you can support the Allies. They won't allow this Regime for very long. Be reasonable. We need to leave this war behind. We need a future for us. Promise me you'll come.

*La Gitana considers The American's offer.*

GITANA: I will. But on one condition.

### **SCENE 9: GITANA'S OLD APPARTMENT**

*The bell rings. A woman comes answer the door.*

MOTHER: Conchi, is that you?

GITANA: Hello, mother.

*The mother opens the door to find her son in the company of another man.*

MOTHER: *Pero... hijo... hijo!* Where have you been all this time?

*The mother and Gitana embrace compelled.*

GITANA: I am here now.

MOTHER: I heard you were in prison.

GITANA: That doesn't matter now.

MOTHER: Every day I worried about you.

GITANA: I don't want you to worry anymore.

MOTHER: After all of these years...

GITANA: Mother, I am going to America. I want you to come with me. *(Pause)*.

MOTHER: Throughout these years not a visit, not a letter.

GITANA: I want us to start again. Everything is happening in America. People have cars and cleaning machines.

MOTHER: I have barely seen your face in the last seven years and now you go away again. I would prefer that you had not come back.

GITANA: I couldn't come earlier. Father didn't want to see me.

MOTHER: He loved you in his own way. And now he's dead. He died and you didn't come to his wake.

GITANA: I was in prison when I knew.

MOTHER: He was killed by one of your friends.

GITANA: Many of my friends have died too. But please, let's not argue over this.

MOTHER: This war... We will never recover from this hell. Thank God now it is over.

GITANA: Now, there is a new hell starting. The hell of the Falange.

MOTHER: At least there will be peace.

GITANA: No, there won't. There will be murder, revenge, anger, abuse. Nobody will be safe in Spain.

MOTHER: There is nothing we can do. God wants it that way.

AMERICANO: Madam, there are plenty of immigrants coming to America looking for opportunity. Everything is happening there right now.

MOTHER: Oh, really? Then what are you doing in Spain?

AMERICANO: I'm here... for business.

MOTHER: What business? Oh yes! I've seen you sell alcohol and pricy extravaganzas.

AMERICANO: Among other things...

GITANA: Mother, this is not about him. It is about us. I don't want to go away from you again.

MOTHER: Then don't. Things will get better in Spain. You will see. Everything will go back to normal.

GITANA: The Nationals will chase me. They will put me in jail again... or kill me.

MOTHER: You can hide at home for a couple of months.

AMERICANO: Gitana, the ship is leaving. We have to go.

MOTHER: What did he call you? Gitana?

GITANA: It is my artistic name. I will be an artist in America. Mother, I want to start a new life away from this horror.

MOTHER: You don't know who you are anymore. And you (*to Americano*), who are you anyway? What do you want from me and from my son?

AMERICANO: I don't want anything from anybody, *Señora*.

GITANA: Mother, I have hidden enough. I want to start over in America. I want to be free, to be happy... And I want to be with you.

MOTHER: *Pero hijo, ¿no ves que...?*

GITANA: Please, mother, come with us. We have nothing left here. Let's try together in America. You and I together again.

MOTHER: You and I... y el Americano.

## **SCENE 10: SHIP**

*On board in the ship, The American, La Gitana and her mother sail to America for a new life.*

**SONG: Farewell España**

**GITANA:** I'LL SING A SAD LITTLE COPLA WOVEN FROM BREEZES, FROM BREEZES AND SUN.  
AND AS I CROSS THE QUIET OCEAN, I SING MY GOODBYE TO ONE.  
FAREWELL, ESPAÑA, DEAR HOMELAND, THE COUNTRY WHERE I WAS BORN.  
SO BEAUTIFUL AND SO (VERY) GRAND, A ROSEBUD WITHOUT A THORN.  
AY, AY, AY ALL OF THIS SORROW I FEEL; I COULD DIE IF I LEAVE YOU BEHIND.

**GITANA/ ALL:** I'LL (WE'LL/YOU'LL) SING A SAD LITTLE COPLA WOVEN FROM BREEZES, FROM  
BREEZES AND SUN. AS I CROSS THE QUIET OCEAN, I SING MY GOODBYE TO ONE.

**CAMPANERA:** LIGHTS IN THE DISTANCE ARE FADING, ESPAÑA, LAND OF MY LOVE  
AND STILL MY POOR HEART IS ACHING, AND CRYING TO GOD ABOVE

**ALL:** LEAVING YOUR GREEN GRASS, YOUR SOFT SAND THAT I'VE WALKED MY WHOLE LIFE  
LONG. FAREWELL, ESPAÑA, MY HEARTLAND, FOR YOU, WE GIVE UP OUR SONG.  
IT'S MORE THAN I HOPE TO UNDERSTAND, TO LEAVE YOU, WHERE I BELONG.  
ESPAÑA, MY HEART, MY HOMELAND, MY LAST GOODBYE.

**ACT II: April 1939, New York City**

**SCENE 1: AMERICANO'S APARTMENT**

*La Gitana and her mother arrive for the first time to the house of El Americano. It's a new setting in a new country for both of them. Mother is resistant to enter but La Gitana grabs her and takes her in.*

GITANA: Don't you love it, Mother? It's all new!

MOTHER: I don't know. I only want to rest. This never-ending journey has exhausted me.

GITANA: Naturally. Who could think that America would be that far from Spain? I'm sure here you will sleep like an angel... for we are in heaven.

MOTHER: You are way too young to know heaven from hell. Getting your husband killed in the war was hell, watching your son in prison was hell, and having your son and husband not talk to each other for years, that was the most horrifying hell of all.

GITANA: But now all that hell belongs to the past and this is the closest we have ever been to heaven.

MOTHER: Let's see if they have a glass of water in heaven... *agua!*

GITANA: I'm sure they do in the kitchen. The tastiest water ever.

MOTHER: *¡Ay hijo!* And what's this? *¡Vaya mamotreto!*

GITANA: It must be one of those modern inventions (...) Now I remember! El Americano told me it is made to do the laundry. It cleans for you!!

MOTHER: Looks like an invention from the devil!

GITANA: Thanks to the devil you won't have to wash anymore. And look on the streets, mother! Women are so elegant...

MOTHER: What kind of costumes are those?

GITANA: That's fashion, mother! Modern clothes, modern utilities, an easier life... I think we're going to be very happy in here.

MOTHER: I don't think this is a good idea...

GITANA: I'm sure it is.

MOTHER: But we cannot even speak this strange language!

GITANA: We will learn, you'll see. Americano will help us.

MOTHER: I'm sure he will. He didn't even come with us to the house.

GITANA: Mother, he had to take care of business.

MOTHER: What business *ni qué* business!! How come? Did he do business in the ship??

GITANA: I guess he did.

MOTHER: I don't know, but something tells me...

GITANA: Come on, mother! You're gonna need a more positive attitude. We had nothing in Spain, we were not even together. And now we are, and we have a house, and clothes, and machines that clean for us.

MOTHER: We have travelled to a land of pure fantasy where we cannot even communicate with each other... I am old now, and it doesn't really matter where I spent my remaining days... But you're still young, all your life's ahead of you. What are you going to do here?

GITANA: My American will turn me into a real artist. (*La Gitana puts her wig on*).

MOTHER: *Niño*, stop!! You cannot keep singing like you did in Spain. Do you want them to kill you?

GITANA: This is who I am, mother. And here is not illegal. This is a whole different world from Spain, and I already love it.

*El Americano enters.*

GITANA: *Mi amor!!*

AMERICANO: What are two lovely young ladies doing in the house in such a beautiful day?

MOTHER: Very charming.

GITANA: This is beautiful!!! Mother and I love it!!

MOTHER: Sure, very pretty.

GITANA: Where have you been? I've missed you!

AMERICANO: I've only been away for a couple of hours...

GITANA: It felt like a whole Civil War... with mother...

AMERICANO: Don't exaggerate... I promise it was worth it... or don't you wanna hear the good news I bring?

GITANA: What is it, what is it?

MOTHER: More good news? *Ay, Virgen del Relicario...*

AMERICANO: I have just signed your first booking in America, my love.

GITANA: Really?

MOTHER: Oh, my God...

AMERICANO: Yes, and it won't be a second class club full of drunken people and smoke like those in Spain... In America, prepare yourselves to listen, all the way from Spain, the beautiful La Gitana at the Ritz Hotel of Manhattan.

GITANA: The Ritz!!! Mother!!!

MOTHER: Is there also a Ritz in here?

AMERICANO: Bigger and better than the one in Spain.

GITANA: And what should I sing, what should I wear? It sounds too important for me.

AMERICANO: Don't worry my love, you will dazzle them. Who wouldn't surrender to La Gitana's exotic charm? With your talent, your passion, your... "*duende*"? Everybody will fall at your feet like I did from the first time I saw you.

GITANA: I always dreamt of singing in a place like that... so glamorous... I remember the shows I saw at the Ritz in Spain...

MOTHER: I even remember when I used to go there, with my mother, and escape from her to dance with your father at the wonderful sound of that orchestra.

GITANA: Oh, yes, mother, and that song you sung me so many times... how was it??

MOTHER: no, no, no, no... I haven't sung for years... since your father...

GITANA: Come, mother, this is a new beginning for both. Please, sing for me.

*Mother starts singing The Ritz Afternoons while Gitana gets changed.*

**SONG: *The Ritz Afternoons***

**MOTHER:** EVERY AFTERNOON YOU'LL FIND ME  
TAKING MY TEA DOWN AT THE RITZ.  
AND AFTER TEA I WILL BE MAKING MISCHIEF,  
I'LL FIND A LAD WHO'LL GO MAD OVER ME.

HE AND I WILL DANCE TOGETHER

IN AN EMBRACE THAT'S SOFT AND CLOSE.  
TILL THERE'S SOMETHING I SIMPLY MUST CLEAR UP  
OVERFLOWING WITH FEELINGS OF SHAME...

BUT, OH MY GOD, PLEASE DON'T HOLD ME SO TIGHT.  
I BEG YOU PLEASE DON'T YOU KNOW IT'S NOT RIGHT.  
MY MOTHER'S WATCHING LOOKING UNIMPRESSED,  
SHE DOESN'T REALISE THAT'S HOW LOVE'S EXPRESSED.

BUT, OH MY GOD, WHEN YOU PRESS UP AGAINST ME,  
I BEG YOU PLEASE... SEE, MY MOTHER IS SCARY!  
MY HEART IS FRAGILE, IT CAN'T TAKE THE PACE,  
IF I AM NOT CAREFUL, I'LL FALL ON MY FACE.

*Transition from the apartment into the stage of the Ritz hotel, where La Gitana performs.*

**GITANA:** MOTHERS SIT AND MOTHERS CHATTER,  
THEY DRINK THEIR TEA AND LIE IN WAIT.  
SAT IN THEIR CHAIRS WATCHING PAIRS DANCE IN CIRCLES,  
AND AS THEY SPIN DEEP WITHIN PASSIONS STIR.

AFTER THREE OR FOUR SUCH DANCES,  
HOW THE ILLUSION STARTS TO GROW.  
AND I MUST TELL HOW I FELL FOR YOUR SPELL  
OVERFLOWING WITH SATISFACTION.

OH, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME,  
BUT SEE MY SMILE, I AM FEELING HAPPY.  
JUST KEEP ON DANCING AS SHE SITS AND STEWS,  
IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM, NOTHING WE CAN DO.

FOR IT'S A JOY, I COULD FOXTROT ALL DAY  
WITH HANDSOME MEN WHO KNOW JUST WHAT TO SAY.  
AND IF I LIVE THROUGH A HUNDRED NEW MOONS,  
STILL I'LL REMEMBER THE RITZ AFTERNOONS.

## **SCENE 2: THE RITZ'S PERFORMANCE HALL**

*At the end of the song, there is a specially enthusiast person in the audience who claps louder than anyone else:*

PINCHO: *Ole, Gitana!!!*

GITANA: *Pincho!! Eres tú?*

PINCHO: *Qué guapa estás, jodía!*

GITANA: I thought I'd never see you again!!

PINCHO: You must never say never.

GITANA: You look so beautiful! Look at these earrings!

PINCHO: This trinket? They were just a present from a special admirer...

GITANA: *La Pincho de Utopía...* you haven't changed at all.

PINCHO: Neither have you. Come on, get me a drink, we have lots to celebrate.

GITANA: But what are you doing in America?

PINCHO: I should ask the same question, shouldn't I?

GITANA: I remember you left during the war. I didn't know you'd be going to America.

PINCHO: I couldn't reveal much information then. Everything was so secretive, and last time we saw each other... Ay, Gitana, you should have focused more on your career! With your talent and your size, you could have been a star way ahead!

GITANA: At that time, I couldn't think of becoming 'a star'.

PINCHO: Well, let's forget about the past. It only depresses me. We are here now, in the land of opportunity, the land of freedom.

GITANA: Pincho, I am so happy in here...

PINCHO: Of course you are! Here you have a real artistic career and you surely earn good money!

GITANA: Well, I try my best. But you haven't told me... how did you find me?

PINCHO: How couldn't I, bitch? You're stealing all of my performances! But don't worry, I know how the business works and you are having a great start.

GITANA: Once again it looks like I'm coming to follow your steps.

PINCHO: I remember my first performances in English, I used to mistake every word. Fortunately people found it funny... and sexy! Since I arrived I've also been very successful... with men. But what can I tell you? I'm sure you have lots of admirers that you let slip into your dressing room...

GITANA: I don't walk on slippery surfaces anymore; I have my only one real admirer at home.

PINCHO: If you say so... Gitana, you know what? I could possibly become your agent, I mean just initially, to help you get started.

GITANA: Thank you, Pincho. You've always been very kind, but I'm afraid I already have... an agent.

PINCHO: And who is it? I knew you would have one. How else could you possibly get that many performances at the Ritz on your own?

GITANA: Well, he is the reason why I left Spain and decided to start a new life. He is the reason why I speak this strange language. He is even the reason why I'm singing at the Ritz. But mainly, he is the reason that filled my mind in the port of Santa María.

PINCHO: Please don't tell me! It is not the American that you met in Utopia? The one with the Tattoo...

*El Americano has been approaching listening to La Gitana speak about him.*

AMERICANO: Hi, I am 'The Reason'.

GITANA: *Mi amor!* This is...

PINCHO: (*stopping Gitana*) Lucero, 'Spanish artist of all the smartest'.

AMERICANO: (*amused*) Oh, hi.

GITANA: Lucero! That's classy, but I prefer Pincho, it reminds me of the old times.

PINCHO: You're a nostalgic, just like the songs you sing... but don't worry: I'm still the same old tramp.

GITANA: 'Lucero' is an old friend from back in Spain. We used to sing together at Utopia.

PINCHO: You don't say old, you say experienced! Oh, those were good old times...

GITANA: She made the move to America a few months before me.

PINCHO: *Hija mía*, at that time you couldn't move further than two meters long, the distance of your cell...

GITANA: We've shared some history...

AMERICANO: Well, it's a pleasure to meet you, Lucero.

PINCHO: Likewise.

GITANA: I'm so happy to be here with both of you.

AMERICANO: If you are happy, that makes me happy.

PINCHO: Happiness is what we need!

AMERICANO: Why don't we celebrate this encounter over a bottle of champagne?

PINCHO: Bubbles make me so electric.

AMERICANO: That we'll give us a chance to know each other better.

PINCHO: Certainly.

GITANA: Let me go and get you a glass, my love.

PINCHO: Darling, bring the whole bottle!

*La Gitana leaves to the bar.*

AMERICANO: So... Lucero, that's a beautiful name.

PINCHO: Thank you. I picked it after a pretty dog my neighbour had back in Spain.

AMERICANO: You're funny, Lucero.

PINCHO: And you're handsome, Americano.

AMERICANO: So... you're an established artist?

PINCHO: In the making.

AMERICANO: Haven't I seen you before?

PINCHO: I doubt it. I am very good at remembering... *(looking at his crotch)* some faces. You must have seen me in the posters.

AMERICANO: It must be that then. Your shows must be stunning.

PINCHO: You'll have the chance to see me in action... There will be opportunities.

AMERICANO: I'm looking forward to that.

*La Gitana comes back with a glass for El Americano.*

GITANA: Here we are. And now let's toast, for the reencounters.

AMERICANO: And for new acquaintances.

PINCHO: And for show business, that gathered us together once again.

*La Gitana's mother shouts euphoric from the end of the room.*

MOTHER: *Tesoro!! Hola!!*

PINCHO: You brought your mother with you? Ay Gitana, you have such a golden heart under those big tits you're wearing...

*Mother arrives, a bit tipsy, to greet La Gitana.*

MOTHER: You were wonderful!! I would never expect a reaction like that in the audience, but I've been held by lots of admirers that wanted to know about you!! I just told them I was your mother and I knew everything about you... Well, except the things nobody needs to know... Then, they started asking me questions and I couldn't understand a word. People here speak very strangely. But they love you!! Americano... I have never really trusted you, but I must confess that you've done a very good job with my son...

GITANA: Mother!

MOTHER: I mean, with La Gitana, of course. At first I couldn't see how you would turn HER into a star, but now I understand that things in this country are not like in Spain.

PINCHO: Of that you can be sure.

GITANA: Mother, do you remember Pincho?

MOTHER: *Pincho! La Pincho de Utopía?* But what are you doing here?

PINCHO: My name is now Lucero.

MOTHER: You haven't answered my question.

GITANA: Mother...

PINCHO: I am a successful artist in America.

MOTHER: Ha!

GITANA: Mother! I'm sorry, Pincho.

PINCHO: Don't worry, Gitana, I too can recognize an OLD friend.

GITANA: Well, it has been an intense day and I should get some rest. Mother, could you escort me to my dressing room?

MOTHER: I would prefer to stay a while and listen to LUCERO's story. (*Apart, to La Gitana*): That name reminds me of Paca España's dog.

GITANA: Mother, stop! Pincho, it was very good to find you again, and I hope that we will see each other again very soon. We have lots of things to talk about.

PINCHO: That's for granted. Here, take my earrings. They have brought me luck in America, and they will do the same for you.

GITANA: Oh... *gracias, Pincho.*

MOTHER: (*Apart*) *Seguro que son robaos.*

PINCHO: *Grosera.*

MOTHER: *Descará!*

PINCHO: *Hay gente que nunca tuvo educación ninguna...*

GITANA: *Vamos, mother... Adiós, mi amor.*

*La Gitana and her mother leave.*

AMERICANO: I think you and I can have another glass of champagne?

PINCHO: Darling, we should have another bottle of champagne!

*Pincho and The American leave in the opposite direction.*

### **SCENE 3.A: AMERICANO'S APPARTMENT**

*La Gitana tries to catch The American's attention while he tries to keep focus on some documents.*

GITANA: Did you like me tonight?

AMERICANO: I told you, you were fabulous. You did a great performance.

GITANA: I mean... me. Did you like ME?

AMERICANO: You know I like you; you're the girl of my eyes, la '*niña de mis ojos*'.

GITANA: (*Amused*) You should tell me this more often. I love the sound of your Spanish.

AMERICANO: Come' on Gitana. You already know I love you. So now let me work.

GITANA: Work... What are you working on now?

AMERICANO: Just a couple of reviews and recommendation letters for you, '*mi amor*'.

GITANA: Shouldn't that be something for others to do?

AMERICANO: I'm going to turn you into a star; don't you want to be a star?

GITANA: I don't want to know about this.

AMERICANO: Then don't ask. You know how this business works.

*Gitana distracts The American from his work trying some seduction tools. When they get intimate, Americano breaks the moment.*

AMERICANO: Tell me about Lucero.

GITANA: Why all that sudden interest in Lucero?

AMERICANO: Are you jealous? (*Amused*) Come on, *mi amor*. I just want to know everything about your life. (*He tries to get close again*).

GITANA: Pincho and I used to sing together. But she didn't want to be involved in anything political and she escaped from Spain when they put me in jail.

AMERICANO: Smart girl.

GITANA: Probably... but very lonely.

AMERICANO: She looks really fun and upbeat.

GITANA: Yes, she is. But she never really integrated among the comrades. She didn't want to commit to our Republican cause. Campanera used to say...

AMERICANO: (*stopping her*) You and your political ideas. If you forgot about them, OUR life would be much easier.

GITANA: Without them, I could have never become La Gitana. I would have never sang, I would have never met you, and I would probably live a miserable life in Spain... away from you and everything I love.

AMERICANO: Let's leave hypotheses aside and tell me about Utopia.

GITANA: During the liberated environment of the Second Republic, everything was possible. In the cabaret shows, star impersonators like *Paca España* would amuse audiences with their songs. And there were those transvestites that would sing double entendre meaning songs at Utopia. Pincho was one of them. She would go on stage with a ridiculous girly dress, leaving visible most body parts, and would adopt a fake naiveté to express feelings of love...

*Pincho performs in 1931's Utopia, Cádiz, Spain.*

### **SONG: Life Can Be Lonely**

**PINCHO:** I LIKE TO DANCE, YES, IT'S TRUE,  
BUT MY HUSBAND FOUND ME OUT  
WHEN WE CAME TO SAY 'I DO',  
HE WAS FILLING UP WITH DOUBT. AY, AY, AY, AY!  
IF YOUR HOBBY IS TABOO,  
THAT'S YOUR MARRIAGE UP THE SPOUT!

LOVE MAY BE HARD TO EXPLAIN  
AND THEY'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND  
HOW A WOMAN SUFFERS PAIN  
WHEN SHE WEARS A WEDDING BAND. AY, AY, AY, AY!  
HOW YOUR TEARS WILL FALL LIKE RAIN  
DANCING ROUND THE BABY GRAND.

LIFE CAN BE LONELY WITH NO-ONE.  
LIFE CAN BE LONELY, YOU THROW ONE DICE  
AND YOU'LL ONLY COME LAST.  
WISH I COULD DIE! NO!  
JOY ENTERS SOFTLY ON TIP-TOE,  
JOY ENTERS SOFTLY, I WANT TO DANCE.

SOMEBODY SAID TO MY MAN:  
'IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR YOUR BRIDE,  
WELL, YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE A PLAN,  
GO AND TAKE HER FOR A RIDE. AY, AY, AY, AY!  
YOU'LL DO ANYTHING YOU CAN,  
EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO HIDE.

SO, OFF HE WENT ON HIS QUEST,  
HE DEMANDED BOLEROS,  
I GAVE IN TO HIS BEHEST,  
AND THEN WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE? AY, AY, AY, AY!  
I WAS UTTERLY DEPRESSED  
AND I PUNCHED HIM ON THE NOSE.

LIFE CAN BE LONELY WITH NO-ONE.  
LIFE CAN BE LONELY, YOU THROW ONE DICE  
AND YOU'LL ONLY COME LAST,  
WISH I COULD DIE! NO!  
JOY ENTERS SOFTLY ON TIP-TOE,  
JOY ENTERS SOFTLY, I WANT TO DANCE.

GITANA: Pincho was great fun and I so admired her. Back in those Republican days, when I still wasn't La Gitana, Campanera encouraged me to speak to her and so I went into her dressing room to wait for her and introduce myself. Everything was beautiful. Her clothes were beautiful, her perfumes were exquisite, I loved everything in there. At first I was tentative but I decided to sit in her chair: I remember discovering my face in front of a mirror surrounded by glamorous lights and I was dying to try her wigs on. My eyes couldn't stop but admiring everything in the room. It was a whole new experience for me. The closest thing I had ever done was trying some of my mother's dresses when I knew my father would be far away. But for the first time I was alone in a dressing room, looking at myself into that mirror with a wig in my head when Pincho came back from doing her performance.

### **SCENE 3.B: 1931, BACKSTAGE UTOPIA (MEMORY 3)**

*Pincho catches La Gitana watching her backstage and takes her to the dressing room.*

PINCHO: What are you doing, *shosho*? Help me down!

GITANA: Oh, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to... I just wanted to...

PINCHO: God! Do you have a stutter?

GITANA: No. I'm an admirer of yours. I've come to all of your shows, I just wanted to meet you.

PINCHO: Oh... Well, nice to meet you. They call me Pincho 'cause I can prick like a needle, and men by my side often get punctures. What is your name? Your artistic name, I mean.

GITANA: I don't have one. I am not an artist.

PINCHO: Then what are you doing here and trying these on?

GITANA: Oh, I'm sorry! I... *(taking the wig off)*.

PINCHO: Keep it on, it looks better on you anyway.

GITANA: Are you sure?

PINCHO: It's a present, now we're friends.

GITANA: Thank you.

PINCHO: You just need a bit of shadow, a bit of glitter, and then you'll shine.

*Gitana looks at her new self in the mirror, mesmerized. Pincho calls for her attention.*

PINCHO: Can you bring me my shoes?

GITANA: Of course.

PINCHO: Thank you sweetheart, you're a doll. You try those over there. Do you sing?

GITANA: Me? Not like you.

PINCHO: You can learn. To succeed in this business, you show a bit of flesh, make a couple of racy jokes... and half the work is done. Then you worry about singing. Do you know the song I sang tonight?

GITANA: Every note, I learned it by heart.

PINCHO: Sing it to me.

GITANA: Oh, no, Pincho, I can't.

PINCHO: Come on. Don't be shy. You cannot come this far and then be shy.

GITANA: Sorry, I can't... I didn't want to... I just...

PINCHO: Look, I'll turn around and I won't look at you, you can sing to that mirror.

*La Gitana starts singing. Pincho is pleasantly surprised.*

PINCHO: *Ay maricón!* If I don't look out, you could take my place.

GITANA: I would never be as good as you.

PINCHO: Listen, I have an artistic name for you. When I got here, I found you stealing my things so... I'll call you La Gitana, because you're like a little gypsy. We'll do a number together, it will be fun. I get bored of singing on my own. Follow me!

GITANA: Where?

PINCHO: To the stage.

GITANA: What! Now?

PINCHO: When else? We only live now! (*Pincho pushes Gitana with her to the stage*). Hello, friends gathered here, are you having fun? Of course you are, I'm on the stage! I want to introduce you to my new friend 'La Gitana'. She will be singing with me tonight, so you better clap like hell. Here we go, Maestro!!

**SONG: *Life can be lonely, Reprise: Pincho sings with Gitana***

**PINCHO/ GITANA:** LIFE CAN BE LONELY WITH NO-ONE.  
LIFE CAN BE LONELY YOU THROW ONE DICE  
AND YOU'LL ONLY COME LAST,  
WISH I COULD DIE! NO!  
JOY ENTERS SOFTLY ON TIP-TOE,  
JOY ENTERS SOFTLY, I WANT TO DANCE.

**SCENE 3.C: 1940, AMERICANO'S APPARTMENT**

*We're back in New York, America, 1940, La Gitana lays in her living room's sofa keeping the memory of her old days at Utopia. Her mother arrives.*

MOTHER: Darling, what are you doing awake this late?

GITANA: Hi mother, I was just daydreaming, remembering my days at Utopia with Pincho.

MOTHER: I don't like that climber, and you know that!

GITANA: Even if I didn't, you made it pretty obvious this evening.

MOTHER: I just said what I had to say. Pincho always used you, and now she's here again to take advantage of your success.

GITANA: She gave me my first opportunity to perform; if I'm here it's partly thanks to her.

MOTHER: Listen, I am older than you and I see things...

GITANA: Mother, you never trust anybody. Why should it be different this time?

MOTHER: Because I saw how she looked at your man.

GITANA: Don't be ridiculous, a friend like Pincho would never do that; but even if she did, *mi Americano* wouldn't care about her. He only cares about me.

MOTHER: Sometimes you can be so NAIVE...

GITANA: Mother, why don't we go away? I have asked *Americano* to leave the US for a while, I am tired of this country and this war...

MOTHER: But how are we going to leave now that you are being so successful?

GITANA: That's exactly what he answered.

MOTHER: Besides, where else could we go? We can't go back to Spain.

GITANA: I was thinking about going to Argentina. I've heard that all the great Copla stars have moved there since Franco won the war. Yesterday I read in a newspaper that Miguel de Molina will be doing a show in Buenos Aires, and I thought about writing him a letter and ask him to join his show.

MOTHER: Darling, Argentina is not a place to go. With the war, the United States is a much safer country to be in. Plus, you already have a career going in here. If you moved there, you would have to start again.

GITANA: I don't mind, mother. Even if I had to do something new, I'm tired of my life and I need to change something.

MOTHER: Then change your repertoire! Listen to me. You just need to be patient and careful. If things keep going this way, you will soon become a big star and you won't have to worry about work anymore. We will be able to live for the rest of our lives with the money that you'll earn. And we will have our own apartment, and our washing machine, and we will be happy. Just you wait.

GITANA: I don't know, mother.

MOTHER: Listen to me. A mother just wants the best for her children. And now get some rest. You have a busy day ahead of you, and you need to get some sleep.

GITANA: But mother...

MOTHER: We can continue this conversation tomorrow, can't we?

#### **SCENE 4: MR SIMON'S OFFICE**

AMERICANO: Hello, Mr Simon. I'm coming referred by Mr Wyner at the Ritz. Can I have a minute of your time?

MR SIMON: Who let you in?

AMERICANO: The door was open. I guess your secretary was taking her lunch break.

MR SIMON: I'm very sorry, but I can't receive you right now. We are extremely busy preparing a show for next week.

AMERICANO: Oh, what show would that be?

MR SIMON: Carnegie Hall is organizing a special concert to raise money for war effort.

AMERICANO: That's a fabulous idea.

MR SIMON: We have a great International Program, but our opening act dropped out and I have little to no time to find a replacement. I couldn't expect this amount of pressure, so please accept my apologies and come back next week. I'm sure my secretary will be able to reschedule you once she's back from lunch...

AMERICANO: I appreciate your stress, but I think I might be able to help.

MR SIMON: Are you a singer?

AMERICANO: Oh, God, no! I'm talking about a real star: a smart and charismatic lady already known from her recurrent performances at the Ritz Hotel.

MR SIMON: Who the hell are you?

AMERICANO: I am here on behalf of mesmerizing gypsy La Gitana, coming all the way from Spain.

MR SIMON: I think I've heard about that. But what I need is an experienced artist who knows how to hold an audience.

AMERICANO: La Gitana has dazzled thousands on both sides of the Atlantic and I can guarantee that you won't regret her insertion on your program.

MR SIMON: Thanks for your time pal, but I think I'll see La Gitana just some other time.

AMERICANO: Why not give her a try? Audiences love her, and I'm sure you want this event to be linked with a new spirit of internationalism, openness and freedom.

MR SIMON: I don't think a two-bit gypsy act is what we're after to represent American standards.

AMERICANO: Well, to prove our empathy and understanding, we are ready to provide a generous contribution to the organization of this show, which would alleviate your economic difficulties for the funding of this event...

MR SIMON: Are you trying to buy me, Mr...?

AMERICANO: Of course not, Mr. Simon, nothing further to my intentions. I'm just offering you assistance and I'm offering you friendship. In these times of difficulty, good Americans must stand as one and help each other. Have a think about it. The offer is on the table.

MR SIMON: What's that?

AMERICANO: Nothing major, just a couple of references and reviews of La Gitana. Take a look.

MR SIMON: (*looking randomly*) ...Bing Crosby likes La Gitana, Howard Hughes likes La Gitana... everybody's friends with La Gitana. Wait a minute; she's sung for the President?

AMERICANO: Among others.

MR SIMON: Right, ok, have her come in for an audition tomorrow at 9am.

AMERICANO: You won't regret this. Good day, Mr. Simon.

## **SCENE 5: CARNEGIE HALL**

*1942, a charity event. Mr Simon announces the line-up for the coming show.*

MR SIMON: Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, *Mesdames et Messieurs, Señoras y Señores*. It is a great privilege for us to host this special concert to lift American moral in times of difficulty. This is an era of fight for the defence of our ideals. We want a world of peace and hope, and Carnegie Hall wants to collect donations for our army... so start opening your wallets. But once you know our program, money will automatically roll out of your purses. We have big names and upcoming names: opening the night, mesmerizing Spanish gypsy La Gitana will join us from her desolate land of Spain, followed by the seductive Marlene Dietrich who has abandoned her Nazi homeland to join the good team, and the main course of the night, our own Billie Holiday, shiny and beautiful as ever. They all will be here in just a couple of minutes, so do not despair... In the meantime, keep drinking, laughing and sharing your dreams for a new era by the sound of our New York Big Band!

*In the wings.*

GITANA: Mother, I'm so nervous... It's the Carnegie Hall!

MOTHER: I never thought we would get so far. I'm proud of you, my, my... Gitana (pause). But wait... your "*mantón*" is taking the wrong shape!

GITANA: Mother, please. Hurry up... I think I'm the first one to perform and we don't have time for these "bobadas" now. The audience is here to listen to my singing, not to comment on my SHAWL...

MOTHER: Dear, every detail counts. Have you seen all the people that are here tonight?

GITANA: Let me see... Oh, my God. I don't know if I can do this...

MOTHER: Don't be silly, they will love you. I wonder where Pincho is sitting...

GITANA: Pincho! '*Los pendientes de la Pincho!!*'

MOTHER: What earrings?

GITANA: The earrings Pincho gave me. She said they'd bring me luck.

MOTHER: Oh, the earrings! I completely forgot! Sorry my dear... I left them on the table, in the dressing room...

GITANA: I'll run to get them. You stay here and fix my "mantón".

MOTHER: Yes dear, but hurry up!

*Gitana runs to the dressing room, opens the door and finds Pincho in intimacy with her man. They all look at each other, Pincho leaves and La Gitana, in shock, starts packing. Meanwhile, the Presenter checks with the mother if La Gitana is ready. Mother sees Pincho come out of the dressing room and decides to go in. To buy time, the Presenter begins a speech introducing La Gitana that we can hear in the background.*

MR SIMON: Coming from the heart of Spain, desolate land of poets...

AMERICANO: You can't leave. We have a contract.

GITANA: Don't even dare to touch me, you scum.

AMERICANO: If you cross that door, it is gonna cost us lots of money.

GITANA: You think I care about money? Before I had no money, and I always survived.

AMERICANO: Gitana...

*Mother enters. They freeze.*

MR SIMON: ...original from tasty Andalusia, a land of joy, passion, colour and sensuality...

MOTHER: Did you find the earrings? (*Giving her the shawl*).

GITANA: I won't need them. We're leaving.

MOTHER: But dear, we can't leave now. It's taken you a lot of work to get here.

GITANA: Mother, pack your things and let's go.

MOTHER: We can't afford being poor again, dear. Not here, not in this country!

GITANA: We'll manage. Let's go mother!

MR SIMON: ...The courage of an artist that has crossed the ocean to bring us the grace of her movement and the melody of her voice...

MOTHER: Listen, Gitana, I'm your mother!!

GITANA: I'm tired of all of you telling me what to do. I'm leaving. You can do what you please.

MOTHER: (*grabs her suitcase*) There is something that you've always loved more than anything else. Do it for them. Do it for your audience. They are expecting you, waiting for you.

*La Gitana stops for a moment. She is announced from the background. El Americano makes signs to the Presenter.*

MR SIMON: ... already known to many for her fabulous performances at the Ritz hotel... (*looks relieved when he sees La Gitana back in the wings*) Today, she is here with us, finally! Please, give your warmest welcome to La Gitana!!!

*La Gitana goes on stage.*

GITANA: Thank you, thank you very much. Maestro...

**SONG: *But I Love You Anyway***

**GITANA:** I'VE BEEN TOLD THOUSANDS OF TIMES NOW  
BUT I NEVER WANTED TO TRULY REALIZE.  
WHEN THE BULLETS REACHED MY HEART  
I ALREADY COULDN'T TAKE YOU APART.

I WAITED UP HALF THE NIGHT  
AND NEVER COMPLAINED AT ALL,  
THE ONLY THING I ASKED FOR  
A LITTLE PIECE OF YOUR LOVE.

COVERED WITH YOUR KISSES, FEELING HOW THEY STING.  
THOUGH INSIDE I'M DYING, NO ONE HEARS MY CRYING EVERYTIME I SING.

I LOVE YOU MORE THAN MY SIGHT,  
I LOVE YOU MORE THAN MY LIFE,  
MORE THAN BREATH THAT FILLS MY BODY,  
MORE THAN ANY OTHER CAN.

AND IF MY LOVE WERE TO STOP,  
WELL, THEN MY HEART WERE CEASE TO BEAT.  
AND LET THE BELLS RING OUT,  
SHOUT IT LOUD, PROCLAIM IT IN THE STREET.

YOU ARE MY VOICE & MY SILENCE,  
AND I SWEAR TO YOU MY DARLING:  
THOUGH I KNOW I SHOULDN'T LOVE YOU,  
THOUGH I KNOW I SHOULDN'T LOVE YOU,  
I STILL LOVE YOU ANYWAY.

*La Gitana bows and leaves disarmed.*

**SCENE 6: THE PORT**

*La Gitana is waiting with a suitcase alone at the port. El Americano arrives.*

AMERICANO: Gitana. Forgive me.

GITANA: I don't trust you anymore.

AMERICANO: You're right. But I love you. Where are you going?

GITANA: Argentina.

AMERICANO: Argentina?

GITANA: I've heard is a good time for artists down there.

AMERICANO: And your mother?

GITANA: She doesn't want to come. Will you take care of her?

AMERICANO: I've come to ask you to stay.

GITANA: You shouldn't have bothered.

AMERICANO: Last time we separated, it was in a port like this.

GITANA: Then you were leaving.

AMERICANO: And you asked me to stay.

GITANA: You left anyway. And my father almost beat me to death. Thank God Campanera was there.

AMERICANO: You were a handsome boy then.

GITANA: I am a woman today.

AMERICANO: And even more beautiful every day.

GITANA:Americano, our story is past.

AMERICANO: I won't be able to live without you.

GITANA: Don't make me laugh. Now go and have fun with Pincho.

AMERICANO: You're confused. Lucero came to your dressing room to wish you luck and got a bit confused as well. She means nothing to me.

GITANA: You're lying again. I mean nothing to you either.

AMERICANO: You are part of me now.

GITANA: Have you ever loved me?

AMERICANO: I always did. I showed you the best way I knew how, by making you a star.

GITANA: I have to go now.

AMERICANO: Please, Gitana.

GITANA: What if I stopped singing?

AMERICANO: You could never do that.

GITANA: Goodbye,Americano.

**SONG: *I Swear This to You***

**AMERICANO:** I JUST DIDN'T REALISE HOW MUCH I HAD HERE,  
NOW IT'S CLEAR AS DAYLIGHT ALL I HAVE TO LOSE.  
AND I SAW SO CLEARLY HOW STRONGLY I LOVE YOU  
WHEN I FOUND THERE IS NO HOPE FOR ME AT ALL.

CARRY ME THROUGH ALLEYS FILLED WITH SHAME AND SADNESS,  
BIND ME TIGHT WITH YOUR STRING, SPIT ME IN MY EYE.  
GRAB SOME DUST IN FISTFULS JUST SEE HOW IT BLINDS ME,  
KILL ME IF YOU HAVE TO, LOVE ME ALL THE SAME.

LOOK WHAT I HOLD WITHIN ME, HOW I LOVE YOU STILL,  
ON MY MOTHER'S LIFE, I CROSS MY HEART AND PROMISE:  
THIS I SWEAR TO YOU.  
NO FORCE ON EARTH CAN HELP ME, THERE'S NO ONE BUT YOU,  
SHOULD I NEVER LIE, YOU WOULD SURELY KNOW IT AND THE WORLD WOULD FADE.

FOR YOU I'LL COUNT EACH GRAIN OF SAND ON THE SHORE.  
FOR YOU I'D TAKE A CARVING KNIFE, TAKE MY LIFE.  
OH GOD! IF I DARE TELL A LIE YOU'LL BE THERE.  
SO I GIVE MY PROMISE ON THE HOLY BIBLE:  
THIS I SWEAR TO YOU.

**GITANA:** YOU ARE NOT THE PERSON, NOT THE MAN I KNEW ONCE.  
NO ONE EVER SAW YOU, NOT THE WAY I DID.  
NOW EACH DAY YOU'RE OFF WITH SOME NEW LITTLE STRANGER,  
INSIDE I AM DYING WITH THE JEALOUSY.

WHO SHOULD POINT THE FINGER? WHO SHOULD HOLD THEIR HANDS UP?  
THOUGH I LONG TO ACCUSE YOU, I'M PARTLY TO BLAME.  
FIRST YOU SAW ME LAUGHING WE'RE FINALLY OVER,  
THEN YOU SEE ME CRYING WASHING YOU AWAY.

**AMERICANO:** LOOK WHAT I HOLD WITHIN ME, HOW I LOVE YOU STILL.  
ON MY MOTHER'S LIFE, I CROSS MY HEART AND PROMISE:  
THIS I SWEAR TO YOU.

NO FORCE ON EARTH CAN HELP ME, THERE'S NO ONE BUT YOU.  
SHOULD I NEVER LIE, YOU WILL SURELY KNOW IT  
AND THE WORLD WILL FADE.

**GITANA:** FOR YOU I'D COUNT EACH GRAIN OF SAND ON THE SHORE.

**AMERICANO:** FOR YOU I'D TAKE A CARVING KNIFE, TAKE MY LIFE.

**GITANA/ AMERICANO:** OH GOD! IF I DARE TELL A LIE YOU'LL BE THERE.

**AMERICANO:** SO I GIVE MY PROMISE ON THE HOLY BIBLE: THIS I SWEAR TO YOU.

*La Gitana faints in the arms of El Americano.*

### **SCENE 7: DREAM SEQUENCE**

*La Gitana wakes up in an empty room with a very soft light. Campanera appears.*

CAMPANERA: Gitana....

GITANA: Campanera?

CAMPANERA: Let me out!

GITANA: Where are you?

CAMPANERA: I'm trapped, inside your head.

GITANA: What can I do?

CAMPANERA: Open your mind and remember.

GITANA: Last time I saw you, you were shot by the Nationals.

CAMPANERA: Now I'm here to guide you.

GITANA: I've missed you.

CAMPANERA: I missed you too; everyone misses you... in Spain.

GITANA: How are the comrades?

CAMPANERA: They need you.

GITANA: In Spain?

CAMPANERA: Yes, in Spain. Come with me. To Spain.

GITANA: I can't.

CAMPANERA: Come back. Go back.

GITANA: I already tried once.

CAMPANERA: Try again. We need you.

GITANA: I'll die. Franco's tyranny will kill me.

CAMPANERA: Fight against it. They need you.

GITANA: I have lost all strength.

CAMPANERA: Do you like your life? *(Pause)* Live again. You won't be alone. We'll go together.

*They head towards the past. El Americano appears.*

AMERICANO: I love you more than money, more than anything.

*Pincho appears.*

PINCHO: It's taken you a long way to get here, you can't throw away all of that effort.

*Mother appears.*

MOTHER: You are a star... in America.

CAMPANERA: Come here. Go back.  
MOTHER: I don't want to see you in jail again.  
CAMPANERA: We need you.  
PINCHO: Singing makes you happy.  
CAMPANERA: Fight!  
AMERICANO: She's dead. I'm alive.

**SONG: *María de la O***

**CAMPANERA:** AS FOR HIS THIRST, YOU WERE WATER.  
AS FOR HIS CHILL, YOU WERE FLAME.  
THEN FOR HIS LIPS YOU WERE KISSES,  
HE HELD IN HIS ARMS YOUR SOFT AND YOUNG FLESH.

**AMERICANO:** A LOVE AS GOOD AS OURS  
THERE IS NONE IN THE WORLD.  
I DAMN THE DIRTY BUSINESS THAT TOOK US APART,  
**CAMPANERA:** BUT TURNED INTO GOLD.

**MOTHER:** YOU'RE MORE THAN A STAR.  
**CAMPANERA:** THE FOREIGNER TOLD YOU AND YOU TRUSTED HIM.  
**PINCHO:** MY LIFE AND MY TALENT  
TO BE WHAT YOU ARE I WOULD GIVE TO HIM.

**ALL:** MARÍA DE LA O!  
**CAMPANERA:** YOU ARE SO UNHAPPY, UNLUCKY, GITANA, BY HAVING IT ALL.  
AND YOU WANT TO LAUGH  
BUT EVEN YOUR EYES ARE SO TIRED AND PURPLE  
FOR SUFFERING MUCH.  
BLAME IT ON THE DOUGH,  
IT WAS ALL ITS FAULT, YOU MISTOOK YOUR "CAREER",  
YOUR AIMS AND YOUR LOVE.  
PUNISHMENT OF GOD, PUNISHMENT OF GOD,  
THAT'S THE CROSS YOU'LL CARRY IF YOU LIE TO YOUR SOUL,  
MARÍA DE LA O.

*Throughout the song, La Gitana is examined, undressed and put to bed. Mother hums.*

GITANA: Campanera, what should I do when I wake up?  
CAMPANERA: You choose.

**SCENE 8: HOSPITAL**

*La Gitana wakes up in hospital. Her mother sits by her side.*

MOTHER: *Cariño mío.*  
GITANA: Where am I?  
MOTHER: You've been sleeping for a long time.  
GITANA: What happened?  
MOTHER: You fainted, at the port.  
GITANA: Now I remember. And where is Americano?  
MOTHER: He's away, taking care of some business. But don't worry about anything now.

*The doctor enters followed by Pincho*

DOCTOR: Good morning.

GITANA: Hello, Doctor. Pincho?

PINCHO: God bless! Sleeping beauty finally woke up.

DOCTOR: How are you feeling? Any pain?

GITANA: I'm fine, just a bit tired.

PINCHO: Of course you are, but we'll take care of you.

DOCTOR: Do you remember what happened?

GITANA: I don't know. I remember being at the port, then I was in a dark room, and you were all there. You too, Doctor. Campanera was there too. She said something about going to Spain...

PINCHO: Darling, Campanera is dead.

DOCTOR: Has this happened before?

GITANA: Campanera has appeared since I arrived in America. She wants to give me a message.

DOCTOR: You have experienced lots of emotions and you are surely still tired. A man brought you in from the port. You were with him when you lost consciousness.

GITANA: Where is he, Doctor? I need to see him.

DOCTOR: You shouldn't be exposed to any hard emotions now. All you need is rest. We've run some tests and soon we'll get some results. Try to sleep and you'll feel better in a few hours. And I think we should all let him rest now.

MOTHER: Doctor, if you don't mind, I would like to stay by my son.

PINCHO: (*Apart, to the doctor*) I would also like to stay here for a little moment.

DOCTOR: As you wish. But don't stay long, and don't reveal any diagnosis. It is premature and it wouldn't help him recover.

PINCHO: Thank you Doctor.

*The doctor exits.*

PINCHO: Gitana, *preciosa*. You look wonderful! How are you? I was so worried about you!

GITANA: Mother, can you leave us for a minute?

MOTHER: No way. I won't leave this room for anything in the world.

GITANA: As you please, but later don't complain. Pincho, where is my Americano?

PINCHO: He's gone to do some business, but you have nothing to worry about... Well, I know I probably shouldn't tell you this now but the manager at the Ritz has asked me to sing in your place... only until you get better, of course!

MOTHER: LUCERO!!

GITANA: Mother, don't worry. Pincho, you can take my place for as long as you want. I don't want to sing anymore.

MOTHER: We need to discuss that.

GITANA: Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could sing. I'm feeling really weak.

MOTHER: But you will get better (*she starts sobbing...*).

GITANA: Mother, are you all right? What happens to you?

MOTHER: (*still sobbing*) I'm fine, I'm fine... it's just a little fly in my eye (*keeps crying*).

PINCHO: Gitana, the doctor said you should just rest, and now we have to leave you. Your mother will feel better after a bit of fresh air, right?

MOTHER: Yes, indeed.

PINCHO: Let's go then.

GITANA: Stop right there the two of you. What are you hiding from me? Pincho!

PINCHO: Nothing Gitana, we just want the best for you (*mother keeps crying*).

GITANA: Pincho, you have lied to me enough.

*Mother keeps sobbing and Gitana fiercely looks at Pincho who doesn't know what to do.*

PINCHO: I just care for your own sake... I guess the reason for your mother to cry is your health. (*Mother tries to stop Lucero*).

GITANA: What do you mean?

PINCHO: Well, your visions are worrying... The doctor is running some tests in your head... Everything is premature but it doesn't look good. I'm so sorry, Gitana. I don't want you to die, we will miss you. But you have nothing to worry about, I will take care of your mother...

MOTHER: Lucero! Get out of here!!

PINCHO: I'm sorry, Gitana, you know I mean no harm, and that my intentions are good.

MOTHER: Out, Lucero, OUT!!

GITANA: (*delirious*) I want to see my Americano. Campanera!

*The doctor enters.*

DOCTOR: I think you should leave too, she must rest.

*The doctor gives morphine to La Gitana*

## **SCENE 9: HOSPITAL**

*Gitana wakes up still in the hospital room.*

AMERICANO: I've heard you've been asking for me. How are you feeling?

GITANA: Can you pass me my wig?

AMERICANO: You look very pretty.

GITANA: I feel naked without it (*puts the wig on her*).

AMERICANO: You're the prettiest woman that my eyes have ever seen.

GITANA: Where have you been?

AMERICANO: Soon you will be La Gitana again.

GITANA: Please answer my question.

AMERICANO: I've been taking care of business. Nothing to worry about.

GITANA: Probably I should have worried more about my own businesses.

AMERICANO: You should rest.

GITANA: Americano, I would like to schedule a performance.

AMERICANO: Whatever you want, my Gitana.

GITANA: I'd like to sing in Spain.

AMERICANO: In Spain?

GITANA: Yes. In Spain.

AMERICANO: You know you can't go there... and get publicly advertised.

GITANA: I don't know how to do that; you are the one who "takes care of business".

AMERICANO: Yes, I am, and I'm telling you it's not possible.

GITANA: I'm determined to go with or without you.

AMERICANO: Gitana, be reasonable, you're still so weak...

GITANA: ...and you are still so selfish.

AMERICANO: Don't be unfair.

GITANA: This will be the last thing I ask of you.

AMERICANO: I'm sorry but I won't be able to help. Now I really have no time to take care of any international businesses.

GITANA: Let me guess: you are keeping busy with Lucero.

AMERICANO: She is so alone. And talented. And it seems you don't need me anymore.

GITANA: You always picked the right opportunity at the right time.

AMERICANO: You cannot complain either.

GITANA: I guess this is goodbye, then. This time for good.

AMERICANO: Just because you want it that way.

**SONG: *The Fairly Paid***

**AMERICANO:** I DON'T OWE YOU, I WON'T BEG YOU.  
I'M LEAVING YOU NOW AND SOMEHOW YOU'LL BE FINE.  
WORTH YOUR WEIGHT IN GOLD, YOUR SWEET BODY SIGHING,  
TRY NOT TO BE ANGRY YOU'RE NO LONGER MINE.

I DON'T LOVE YOU, YOU DON'T LOVE ME.  
SO, YOU GAVE YOUR HEART, YES, BUT AT WHAT COST?  
YOU SAY YOU'RE DEFENCELESS, DON'T THROW THAT IN MY FACE,  
WHEN I'M NEXT TO YOU, I'M THE ONE THAT'S LOST.

FAIRLY PAID, YOU HAVE BEEN SO FAIRLY PAID.  
I BOUGHT YOUR KISSES FOR FAME  
AND YOU GAVE YOURSELF TO ME  
FOR JUST A HANDFUL OF COINS.  
FAIRLY PAID, FAIRLY PAID,  
YOU GOT WHAT YOU DESERVED.

I LIKE PINCHO, NO MORE LYING,  
DON'T THINK THAT I WANTED TO SEE YOU FALL APART.  
I WAS NEVER LOOKING, STILL SHE CAME AND FOUND ME,  
SHE'S WORTH EVERY CENT YET HER LOVE'S FREE OF CHARGE.

I WON'T BEG YOU, I WON'T ROB YOU.  
I WILL LEAVE OUR PASSION TUCKED BETWEEN THE SHEETS.  
HAPPINESS AND SADNESS, IT'S ALL JUST A GAME, LOVE.  
WE ARE SIMPLY PLAYERS AND EVERYBODY CHEATS.

FAIRLY PAID, YOU HAVE BEEN SO FAIRLY PAID.  
I BOUGHT YOUR KISSES FOR FAME  
AND YOU GAVE YOURSELF TO ME  
FOR JUST A HANDFUL OF DIMES.  
FAIRLY PAID, FAIRLY PAID,  
YOU GOT WHAT YOU DESERVED.

**SCENE 10: IN THE SHIP**

*La Gitana and her mother are on board to Spain, in the deck of an ocean liner looking at Manhattan's skyline.*

GITANA: Mother, isn't it beautiful?

MOTHER: It is indeed... I'm going to miss the new world.

GITANA: Who would believe that you would say that when you first arrived...

MOTHER: Even a woman of my age has still plenty to learn. You are sailing to face death; you know that, don't you?

GITANA: We all have to die at some point.

MOTHER: But you don't need to die like this!

GITANA: Don't start again. I need to go back. There are so many things I left there unfinished.

MOTHER: Others will finish them for you.

GITANA: I want to let every *camarada* know that I'm willing to help in any way I can.

MOTHER: You have always been brave... and stubborn.

GITANA: You are stubborn too... *cabezota!*

MOTHER: I can't see Manhattan anymore.

GITANA: It will always remain in our minds. Now we need to look forward, to the future, to Spain.

MOTHER: You pronounced the same words when we sailed to America.

GITANA: And now look at us on our return journey. (*Pause*) I must confess I always missed Spain.

MOTHER: That I must agree, I've missed it too.

GITANA: It is where we belong.

*Campanera appears to sing the first verses of 'Sighs of Spain' in Spanish. La Gitana and her mother dance this pasodoble and join singing in English.*

**SONG: Sighs of Spain**

**CAMPANERA** (in Spanish): *Quiso Dios, con su poder  
fundir cuatro rayitos de sol y hacer con ellos una mujer.  
Y al cumplir su voluntad en un jardín de España nació como la flor en el rosal.  
Dentro del alma te llevaré, cuna de gloria, alegría y blasón.  
España, ya nunca más te he de ver, de pena suspira mi corazón.  
Tierra gloriosa de mi querer, tierra bendita de perfume y pasión.  
España en toda flor a tus pies, suspira un corazón.*

**GITANA:** WOE IS ME POUR ON YOUR SCORN,  
OH SPAIN, I WALKED AWAY FROM YOUR ARMS,  
EACH ROSE IS NOW A MAZE FULL OF THORNS.

**GITANA/ MOTHER:** HOW I LONG, LONG TO RETURN  
BACK TO THE RAYS OF SUN IN THE SKY,  
BACK TO THE RAGING FIRES THAT BURN.

**GITANA:** OH, OH MY MOTHER, IS THERE ANOTHER?

**GITANA/ MOTHER:** WHO COULD BE DAYLIGHT  
AND REMIND US OF THE WAY LIGHT  
SCRATCHES THROUGH TO BRING THE MORNING?

**CAMPANERA:** STANDING AND WAITING, WORRIES ABATING.

**CAMPANERA/ MOTHER:** DEWDROPS ARE FALLING,

**GITANA:** MY SPAIN IS CALLING,

**CAMPANERA/ MOTHER/ GITANA:** AND IT WILL ALWAYS CALL THE LOUDEST

FOR THE PROUDEST NEVER EVER FAILS.

**GITANA:** OH, DEEP IN MY HEART I SING JUST FOR YOU.  
OH SPAIN, WHEN I AM DYING, MY SPAIN, I HEAR YOU SIGHING.

**ALL:** OH, DEEP IN MY HEART I SING JUST FOR YOU.  
OH SPAIN, WHEN I AM DYING, MY SPAIN, I HEAR YOU SIGHING.

### **EPILOGUE: SCENE 11. UTOPIA**

*La Gitana arrives to the club that one day was Utopia. The atmosphere is quite different from the Utopia that once existed. The stage is empty; there are a couple of National soldiers sitting around one table and a woman with a crutch sitting in another table. Now in the entrance says Casa Jacinto. Gitana enters covered with a black cloak and goes to the bar, where a waiter is cleaning a few glasses.*

JACINTO: I'm sorry, *Señora*, but we are closing.

GITANA: I can't believe my ears... *Señora*? I'm still a little gypsy.

JACINTO: Gitana, is that you? Where have you been all of this time? We haven't heard from you since... 1939?

GITANA: It was the end of the war.

JACINTO: Yes, I remember. But how are you? You look different...

GITANA: I've kept myself 'busy'.

JACINTO: You're still the same.

GITANA: Utopia, however, has changed a lot.

JACINTO: Spain has changed a lot. Since the Nationals won the war, Cádiz is a different town. They closed Utopia, and turned it into a quarters of the Falange, far from the ludicrous playground it used to be. I bought the licence and they re-named it Casa Jacinto... honourable, isn't it? As if I had a say... but there are nights when some of our old friends still come have a drink and the place fills up with memories.

GITANA: Jacinto, I've come back to find Dolores and the comrades. Do you know where they are?

JACINTO: There are no more comrades. Many Republicans were killed; others still hide. Things are quieter now that the Republic is not a threat to the Falange, but there are so few of us left that it is useless to gather... at least at this point. *(Pause)* But Dolores, she is not difficult to find: *(pointing at the table in front of the stage)* she's always been the last customer to leave our Utopia.

GITANA: *Gracias*, Jacinto.

JACINTO: Welcome back.

*La Gitana approaches the woman sitting alone in the table. They look at each other. These past few years have really changed them.*

GITANA: Dolores.

DOLORES: Gitana?

GITANA: May I sit?

DOLORES: You're back.

GITANA: Yes.

DOLORES: Where have you been?

GITANA: In America.

DOLORES: That explains your looks... You should have said goodbye. We missed you. I missed your "performances".

GITANA: Is that why you still come here?

DOLORES: Maybe. This present is not worth living, and there seems to be no future for me, so I take refuge in the past. Do you remember when you used to take that stage?

GITANA: I could never forget it.

DOLORES: You must be a big star in America.

GITANA: I was. But now I'm back.

*The Nationals in the other table leave. Jacinto approaches.*

JACINTO: Ladies, it's time to go home. Should I walk you home, Dolores?

DOLORES: That would be much appreciated, Jacinto.

*As Dolores stands up, Gitana realizes that she is missing a foot and walks on crutches.*

GITANA: What happened?

DOLORES: A present from the *falangistas*.

GITANA: I'm sorry.

JACINTO: You should come with us, Gitana. It is not safe to stay out this late.

GITANA: Jacinto... may I ask for a last favour? (*Dolores and Jacinto look at each other and then at Gitana*) Do you mind if I stayed alone in Utopia for a few moments?

*Dolores hugs Gitana and walks towards the door, followed by Jacinto.*

JACINTO: You know where everything is. Switch off the lights before you leave. The door locks when you push from the outside. See you tomorrow?

GITANA: See you tomorrow.

DOLORES: Welcome back, Gitana.

*Dolores and Jacinto leave holding hands. La Gitana is left alone in her old Utopia. She goes to the light switch and turns on the stage lights. Then goes up on the stage, salutes an imaginary audience and starts singing a capella.*

### **SONG: Sorrow**

**GITANA:** IF I WERE TO TAKE POWER OVER THE STARLIGHT,  
IN THE DEEP OF DARKNESS; STILL AS AN OCEAN,  
I WOULD FORGE A KNIFE, FROM THE MOON, FROM THE VERY NIGHT,  
AND I'D CUT THE BARS OF YOUR CELL, CUT IT OPEN.  
IF I WERE THE QUEEN OF THE EARTH, WIND AND SEA,  
OF THE LIGHT OF THE SUN,  
I'D TAKE UP YOUR SHACKLES AND BIND THEM ROUND ME,  
OUR FREEDOM BE WON.

OH MY SORROW, LITTLE SORROW, SORROW,  
LITTLE SORROW OF MY HEART.  
LITTLE HOPE FOR OUR TOMORROW, SORROW  
CRACKING EVERYTHING APART...  
LIKE THE SHADOWS RUNNING OVER ROCKY MOUNTAINS, RUNNING FAR,  
LIKE A LITTLE FOAL THAT'S LOST ITS WAY AMONG THE ROCKY PATHS.  
LIKE A CELL WITHOUT A DOOR, OH, SORROW.  
LIKE MY HEART CAN TAKE NO MORE, OH, MY SORROW, MY SADNESS,  
MY PITY, LITTLE SORROW.

*During the song, the characters of Gitana's life (Campanera, Pincho, her Mother, and El Americano) join her farewell performance.*

I DON'T WANT YOUR FLOWERS, APPLAUSE, OR YOUR MONEY.  
I WANT TO BE FREE, FREE TO CRY FOR YOUR HEARTACHE.  
AND BE BY YOUR SIDE, WITH YOUR JOY, WITH YOUR AGONY  
AND DRINK ALL YOUR TEARS LIKE THEY CAME FROM A LAKE.  
MY EYES ARE IN PAIN, AS THEY SEARCH BUT DON'T FIND,  
AS YOUR FACE NEVER SHOWS.  
CAN THEY BE TO BLAME FOR YOUR LUCK, SO UNKIND?  
OH, MY APRIL ROSE...

**ALL:** OH, MY SORROW, LITTLE SORROW, SORROW,  
LITTLE SORROW OF MY HEART.  
LITTLE HOPE FOR OUR TOMORROW, SORROW,  
CRACKING EVERYTHING APART...  
LIKE THE SHADOWS RUNNING OVER ROCKY MOUNTAINS, RUNNING FAR,  
LIKE A LITTLE FOAL THAT'S LOST ITS WAY AMONG THE ROCKY PATHS.  
LIKE A CELL WITHOUT A DOOR, OH, SORROW.  
LIKE MY HEART CAN TAKE NO MORE, OH, MY SORROW, MY SADNESS,  
MY PITY, LITTLE SORROW.

*A National Guard steps out of the shadows. He aims his rifle at the stage. Lights off. We hear a shot.*

## THE COPLA SOLO

Monologue with songs inspired in *The Copla Musical*, by Alejandro Postigo.

### Prologue

1942. Spanish artist La Gitana is sitting in her dressing room with a suitcase, an envelope and a letter. As she puts the letter in the envelope, she sings a Copla:

LIKE A CELL WITHOUT A DOOR, OH, SORROW.  
LIKE MY HEART CAN TAKE NO MORE, OH, MY SORROW, MY SADNESS,  
MY PITY, LITTLE SORROW.

*La Gitana undresses and packs her clothes in the suitcase. As she closes it, we hear a political speech from Franco in Spanish: A totalitarian state will reign in Spain. The functioning of all the capacities and energies of the country, and the work considered as the least avoidable duty, will be the exponent of the popular will. And thanks to that the authentic power of the Spanish people will be able to manifest through those natural structures, like the family, the city council, the associations and the corporations which will strengthen in reality our supreme ideal.*

### Scene 1: The research

*A researcher in contemporary England takes La Gitana's letter and clips it to his clipboard.*

That was the voice of Francisco Franco on the day he won the Spanish Civil War. Many artists exiled out of Spain in a pursuit of freedom of expression. The object of this study, La Gitana, was one of those artists. This is the letter that she wrote to her fellow artist, the also exiled Miguel de Molina.

*'Querido Miguel: Dear Miguel,*

*Puede que ya no te vuelva a escribir más / This might be the last time I write.*

*Vuelvo a Cádiz a enfrentarme a mis fantasmas / I am going back to Cádiz to face my phantoms.*

*Necesito pisar de nuevo el escenario que una vez me convirtió en La Gitana / I must step once again onto that stage that made me La Gitana that I am today".*

She continues: "I will take my songs with me. Each *copla* symbolizes each and everything that has happened to me over the last few years. These songs are the reflection of the most powerful human emotions'.

That's *copla*. Stories of love, longing and passion, where the protagonists are the minorities of the past; gypsies, women, and marginal members of society. Homosexual collectives have strongly identified with them since the years of the dictatorship, and this brings us back to Spanish drag artist La Gitana, who transformed and brought to life *copla* songs beyond Spanish borders.

Life in New York wasn't easy for La Gitana, but life before New York was even worse. She was once Federico Castro, a Republican militant under the oppression of the 'Falange', Franco's faction in the war. Not even Federico's father, Ramiro Castro, a very influential *falangista*, could avoid that Federico spent the final year of the war in Santa María's prison. During the Civil War, Spain was divided in two factions, but both of them listened to *copla*.

Imagine the war context. I still remember the stories my grandma used to tell me about the things that took place during the war... Close your eyes... Come on, close your eyes. Now, imagine Federico in Santa María's prison: a female soul trapped in the body of a young boy, who is also trapped by a fascist regime.

*The actor strips and sits on the floor recreating Santa María's prison.*

**SONG: Jailer of The Port**

I'D RATHER DIE THAN GO ON LIVING, I'D RATHER DROWN THAN GO ON  
BREATHING. I'M WATCHING THE SHIPS SAIL GENTLY, I'M WATCHING THE WORLD  
ESCAPE ME BEHIND WALLS IN THE PORT SANTA MARIA.

STRANGERS GUARD ME WHEN SLEEPING AND THEY ARE THE ONES TO BLAME  
FOR ALL OF THE WORLD COLLIDING AND ALL OF THE LAND DIVIDING.  
I'M WATCHING A LITTLE SAILBOAT GO SLOWLY ACROSS THE SEA:  
SOME SAY IT GOES TO AMERICA OTHERS SAY IT COMES TO SHORE,  
I PRAY IT GOES TO AMERICA BUT I'VE BEEN LET DOWN BEFORE,  
I 'VE BEEN LET DOWN ONCE BEFORE.

AY, AY, AY, AY, AY, AY, A SWEET LITTLE SAILBOAT IS COMING TO CADIZ,  
IT'S COMING TO CADIZ, IT FLOATS THROUGH THE BAY.  
IT'S COMING TO CADIZ, IT FLOATS THROUGH THE BAY.  
BUT NOBODY SEES ME, BUT NOBODY SEES ME  
BEHIND WALLS IN THE PORT SANTA MARIA.

## Scene 2: La Gitana

*The researcher speaks to his boyfriend David from the sofa in their studio.*

I still can't believe I made it to the next round of interviews... They said my methods were a bit... unconventional, but I think they are genuinely intrigued by the project. I mean, who wouldn't? There's so much passion and history in La Gitana. Gi-tana... Her name is La Gi-ta-na! As in gypsy, but in Spanish. I can't believe you still can't say La Gitana, I've been talking about her all week... Yes, the singing tranny that performed in America. But, you're missing the point here: she was a Republican hero that escaped Franco's Regime. Of course she didn't escape dressed as a woman, how could a transgender woman cross Spanish borders under Franco's surveillance? She'd be shot and I wouldn't be talking about her now. Maybe you would prefer that, wouldn't you?

I'm not surprised you haven't heard of La Gitana. She's been completely deleted from the history of Spain. Franco's regime took good care of that... Well, yes, eventually, she got killed by the Nationals in Spain, but that was when she went back... Yes, to Spain! Yes, from America! Well, she missed Spain and decided to go back. She didn't get used to living away from her homeland... I can understand that. Maybe, at the time she wouldn't think about the political consequences. She probably lost touch with reality. After all in New York, she was a star in Carnegie Hall! OK, she only performed once in 1942... but she performed with the big ones of the time: Billie Holiday, even Marlene Dietrich was in America by then... La Gi-ta-na!! So what if you've never heard of her? Have you heard of every artist performing in Carnegie Hall?

Listen, La Gitana escaped with the help of an American lover just the day Franco won the Spanish Civil War. That American must have been very influential... I really want to get to the core of La Gitana. I need time to do more research. I know, I know I am fully packed with work and... yes, I am fully aware of all my deadlines, but... it's such a fascinating story! One day, Federico is lamenting his fate in Santa María's prison, the day after he is off to America to live as La Gitana, a star at Carnegie Hall... Isn't that... fascinating? Ok, you go shower. No, I will shower later. Now I must practice for the next round. I really need to get this fund.

*David goes to shower offstage.*

La Gitana sang her *copla* songs in America... in English! *Copla* was a big part of her Spanish identity, it seems that she lived her life through *copla*! Imagine the night she met her Americano.

### **SONG: *Tattoo***

Imagine a port in Southern Spain: a quiet evening, the sky is pink, the streetlights just turned on, and only the sounds we hear are the sea and the breeze.

*EL LLEGÓ EN UN BARCO DE NOMBRE EXTRANJERO  
LE ENCONTRÉ EN EL PUERTO UN ATARDECER*

A woman of easy virtue wanders the streets looking for her next client. But this woman has dreams: she dreams of falling in love. And her dream is about to come true: a foreign sailor, blonde like beer and tanned by the sun arrives in town. He pays for her services but she refuses the money hoping for a night of real love. But he can't love her: his heart was wounded by another woman. He's a victim of an impossible love.

LOOK AT MY CHEST, MY TATTOO,  
THE FADED LETTERS OF A NAME.  
A MEM'RY OF SOMEONE I KNEW,  
SOMEONE WHO SET MY HEART AFLAME.  
SHE LOVED ME FIRST, BUT NEVER WAITED.  
I WAITED BUT SHE NEVER CAME.  
AND NOW INSIDE MY ARM ARE BRAIDED  
THE FADED LETTERS OF HER NAME.

The sailor leaves and the woman becomes obsessed with him.

IN THE COOL OF EVENING, I COULD SEE HIM LEAVING  
BACK ABOARD THE STEAMER THAT BROUGHT HIM TO MY SHORES.  
LEFT ON LAND BEHIND HIM STOOD A LITTLE GYPSY  
WILLING TO DELIVER KISSES TO HIS LIPS.  
SINCE THAT DAY I'VE WANDERED AND SEARCHED ALL THE DOCKYARD,  
NOT A SOUL HAS HEARD OF OR ONCE SEEN HIS FACE.  
I SEARCHED EVERY MARKET, LOOKED IN EVERY TAVERN,  
HOPING JUST FOR SOMETHING: JUST A LITTLE TRACE.  
I FEEL MY HEART IS GROWING SICKER, I'VE BEEN TO HALF THE PORTS OF SPAIN.  
AND I'LL TAKE ANY GLASS OF LIQUOR TO HELP ME SUFFOCATE MY PAIN.

LOOK AT MY ARM, MY TATTOO,  
THE FADED LETTERS OF A NAME.  
A MEM'RY OF SOMEONE I KNEW,  
SOMEONE WHO SET MY HEART AFLAME.  
HE LOVED ME FIRST, BUT NEVER WAITED.  
I WAITED BUT HE NEVER CAME.  
AND NOW INSIDE MY ARM ARE BRAIDED  
THE FADED LETTERS OF HER NAME.

Would her dream become true? Would her Americano cross paths with her again?

*ESCÚCHAME MARINERO, Y DIME QUÉ SABES DE ÉL.  
ERA GALLARDO Y ALTANERO Y ERA MÁS DULCE QUE LA MIEL.*

*MIRA SU NOMBRE DE EXTRANJERO ESCRITO AQUÍ SOBRE MI PIEL.  
SI TE LO ENCUENTRAS MARINERO DILE QUE YO MUERO POR ÉL.*

### **Scene 3: The partner**

*David is back from the shower.*

David, that is destiny! it had to be that night! Isn't that such a coincidence? La Gitana met her Americano on the night Franco won the war, and he took her to America... It reminds me of the night that we met for the first time in Madrid, before you returned to London. What do you mean there is no coincidence? It is like us! We also met in Spain and now we're here... in England! OK, we didn't meet in the Spain of Franco, but it kind of looks the same: there's eviction, corruption, crisis... the biggest Diaspora of Spanish youth since then!

I clearly see some parallels between our story and La Gitana's... She had a tough relationship with her father and fled the country looking for opportunity and freedom. How does that relate to us? I'll tell you how it relates to me: I don't think I would have moved to London if it wasn't for you... I can only empathize with the feeling, when everything you've been fighting for, everything you believe in is gone. And you have to start again from scratch. I just wonder what went through La Gitana's mind when she left...

I'm not being dramatic. La Gitana did that and so have I. Thinking too hard about everything I say, making people repeat their lines, not finding the references in the jokes, not understanding the idiosyncrasy... You don't know how hard it is to say goodbye to everything you know: your family, your friends, your home...

### **SONG: Farewell España**

I'LL SING A SAD LITTLE COPLA WOVEN FROM BREEZES, FROM BREEZES AND  
SUN. AND AS I CROSS THE QUIET OCEAN, I SING MY GOODBYE TO ONE.  
FAREWELL, ESPAÑA, DEAR HOMELAND, THE COUNTRY WHERE I WAS BORN.  
SO BEAUTIFUL AND SO VERY GRAND, A ROSEBUD WITHOUT A THORN.  
AY, AY, AY, ALL OF THIS SORROW I FEEL; I COULD DIE IF I LEAVE YOU BEHIND.

No, I'm not complaining to you, but this is the reality I'm living, and I don't know how much longer I am willing to live like this... I'm not talking about us. I am talking about me in England. All I'm saying is I miss Spain. I understand my circumstances, I am not a child, but can't I express what I feel? Not even to my partner? Then why are we together? I miss Spain, I have always missed Spain, I am not living badly here, but there are things I miss and I probably always will... Sure, let's end this conversation here, but that won't make things better...

LIGHTS IN THE DISTANCE ARE FADING, ESPAÑA, LAND OF MY LOVE.  
AND STILL MY POOR HEART IS ACHING, AND CRYING TO GOD ABOVE.  
LEAVING YOUR GREEN GRASS, YOUR SOFT SAND, THAT I'VE WALKED MY WHOLE  
LIFE LONG. FAREWELL, ESPAÑA, MY HEARTLAND, FOR YOU, WE GIVE UP OUR  
SONG.  
IT'S MORE THAN I HOPE TO UNDERSTAND TO LEAVE YOU, WHERE I BELONG.  
ESPAÑA, MY HEART, MY HOMELAND, MY LAST GOODBYE.

#### Scene 4: The father<sup>1</sup>

*A ringing phone interrupts the singing.*

¿Papá? Te he dicho mil veces que ya te llamo yo. No, no hace falta... Bueno, no importa. Sí, estoy bien. ¿Y tú? ¿Y mamá? Si, si, aquí todo bien... Es que estoy muy ocupado. Estoy trabajando en un nuevo proyecto... A ti te gustaría, es sobre una cantante de copla de los tiempos de la guerra. La Gitana. Nadie ha oído hablar de ella todavía, por eso estoy investigando yo. Cuando escribí mi artículo sobre cantantes de copla exiliados en América Latina, encontré una carta que Miguel de Molina... sí, ¡Miguel de Molina! Miguel de Molina recibió una carta en Buenos Aires de otro amigo artista que estaba en Nueva York. Bueno, pues este amigo, que se llamaba Federico Castro, era conocido en el escenario como La Gitana... Era una mujer transgénero, que actuaba como mujer... Bueno, gay... Miguel de Molina también era gay. Todo el mundo lo sabe.

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the scene is performed in Spanish and subtitled as follows:

Dad? I've told you a thousand times that I will call you. No, you don't have to... Anyway, it doesn't matter. Yes, I'm good. And you? And mom? Yes, yes, here everything's good, yes... It's just that I am busy. I am working on a new project... You'd like it, it's about a *copla* singer from the times of the Civil War. La Gitana. No one has heard about her YET, that's why I'm writing about her. When I was doing my investigation about *copla* singers exiled in Latin America, I found a letter that Miguel de Molina... yes, Miguel de Molina! He received a letter in Buenos Aires from an artist friend in New York. Well, this friend named Federico Castro was actually known on stage as La Gitana... She was a transgender woman, she lived as a woman. Well, gay... Miguel de Molina was gay too. Everyone knows that.

What do I know? You know how *copla* songs were popular with women, in touch with the female emotions and the gays loved them. Maybe becoming a woman... La Gitana. Nobody knew. Not even her closest admirers... Yes, she had an American lover, he introduced her in America... *Ay papá!* What do I know if he knew or didn't know! I wasn't there to ask him!... Well, he should know... after all, he would feel her plastic tits... Yes, women's tits! A transgender woman who always identified as female, she made people call her La Gitana... It doesn't matter, you don't need to understand anything really. La Gitana was who she was and that's that.

So what if she dressed up and performed in drag? That was her choice. She was good, people liked her. No, people didn't laugh at her, people laughed WITH her. People aren't that judgmental. As usual, you just don't get it. Fine, just take it or leave it but don't preach to me. Look dad, we don't live in Franco's Spain anymore. We have moved miles away from that... We even have more than 10 years of gay marriage in Spain...! Those years are gone. Dad, listen to me! I am trying to tell you that...

¿Y yo qué sé? La copla era muy popular entre las mujeres, entendía el sentimiento femenino y a los gays les encantaba. Quizás convirtiéndose en mujer... La Gitana. Nadie lo sabía, ni sus admiradores más cercanos... Sí, tenía un amante americano, fue el que la llevó a América... ¡Ay papá! Yo qué sé si lo sabía o no lo sabía... ¡No estaba ahí para preguntárselo!... Pues claro que lo sabría, después de todo le pondría las tetas de plástico... ¡Sí, tetas de mujer! Era una mujer transgénero, siempre se identificó como mujer, le llamaban La Gitana... Mira, no importa, no tienes que entender nada, de verdad. La Gitana era quien era y punto.

¿Y qué si se vestía de mujer? Era su elección. Era muy buena, a la gente le gustaba. No, la gente no se reía de ella, en todo caso se reiría CON ella. La gente no juzga tanto como tú. Mira, como siempre, no lo pillas. Vale, pues o lo tomas o lo dejas, pero no me sermonees. Mira papá, ya no vivimos en la España de Franco. Ha llovido mucho desde entonces... ¡llevamos más de 10 años de matrimonio gay en España...! Esos años ya pasaron. ¡Papá, escúchame! Estoy intentando decirte que...

*Papá, I love copla because of you. We are not so different. We both like Miguel de Molina, but he is gay and you must accept it. I have learnt to love your world. Now is your turn. I don't want to hide from you, from mum. You must love me as you love copla, as I love copla. Can you imagine the copla songs... in English? (she sings): 'But nobody sees me, but nobody sees me behind walls...'*

La Gitana also first discovered *copla* through her father. He used to take her to the Ritz in Madrid, when she still was Federico, a pretty young boy... Years later she became a star also at the Ritz, but this time in New York. She took *copla* all the way across the Atlantic. But that wasn't the only thing she took with her. She also brought lipstick, mascara, blush, and that trunk that contained all those shawls, gowns, attires, and of course the box of trinkets that safely kept the treasures that La Gitana missed so much behind walls (*referring to the plastic tits*). But most importantly, she brought her memories of Spain and offered them to her American audience. Would you recognize this song?

**SONG: *The Ritz Afternoons***

EVERY AFTERNOON YOU'LL FIND ME TAKING MY TEA DOWN AT THE RITZ,  
AND AFTER TEA I WILL BE MAKING MISCHIEF, I'LL FIND A LAD WHO'LL GO MAD  
OVER ME...

Can you only imagine La Gitana in front of her American audience telling a story of this sort? So Spanish, isn't it? *Ay papá*, La Gitana makes me feel nostalgic of a Spain I haven't even known. Audiences must have been in shock at the time, although, who knows, in America...

BUT, OH MY GOD, PLEASE DON'T HOLD ME SO TIGHT.  
I BEG YOU PLEASE DON'T YOU KNOW IT'S NOT RIGHT.  
MY MOTHER'S WATCHING LOOKING UNIMPRESSED,

SHE DOESN'T REALISE THAT'S HOW LOVE'S EXPRESSED.  
BUT, OH MY GOD, WHEN YOU PRESS UP AGAINST ME,  
I BEG YOU PLEASE... SEE, MY MOTHER IS SCARY!  
MY HEART IS FRAGILE, IT CAN'T TAKE THE PACE,  
IF I AM NOT CAREFUL, I'LL FALL ON MY FACE.

MOTHERS SIT AND MOTHERS CHATTER, THEY DRINK THEIR TEA AND LIE IN WAIT.  
SAT IN THEIR CHAIRS WATCHING PAIRS DANCE IN CIRCLES,  
AND AS THEY SPIN DEEP WITHIN PASSIONS STIR.  
AFTER THREE OR FOUR SUCH DANCES HOW THE ILLUSION STARTS TO GROW,  
AND I MUST TELL HOW I FELL FOR YOUR SPELL,  
OVERFLOWING WITH SATISFACTION.

OH, I DON'T KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME,  
BUT SEE MY SMILE, I AM FEELING HAPPY.  
JUST KEEP ON DANCING AS SHE SITS AND STEWS,  
IT'S NOT OUR PROBLEM NOTHING WE CAN DO.  
FOR IT'S A JOY, I COULD FOXTROT ALL DAY  
WITH HANDSOME MEN WHO KNOW JUST WHAT TO SAY.  
AND IF I LIVE THROUGH A HUNDRED NEW MOONS  
STILL I'LL REMEMBER THESE RITZ AFTERNOONS.

### **Scene 5: The drag**

Thank you, audience! My audience. La Gitana's audience. I love La Gitana, I love her freedom, her joy, her courage, her pioneering instinct. Imagine the Ritz in New York in 1942, imagine La Gitana seducing her American audience with her charm, her humor, her Spanishness... Imagine the risks, if anyone found out who she really was. Or maybe some people knew and became her confidants, her partners in crime. Her audience. A time of unspoken truths, of political instability, and a Spanish woman in disguise fighting to be herself. How exciting.

The more I learn about La Gitana, the more I want to know. David says I am going crazy, that I am getting obsessed. That the past is killing my present, that all of this is boring. That, why should I worry about wars and dictatorships that took place so many years ago? Why should I care about a tranny that couldn't decide what to do with her life? That why can't I stop listening to *cop/a*, when nobody does anymore?

I don't know. But in researching all this, I feel little rushes of adrenaline. I once had a teacher that used to say that vocation is like an ant up your ass that never stops moving, that never lets you stop. My vocation, my research is all I have left here. David is always out, I don't know where he goes, I don't know what he thinks. And I am starting to question

what I feel. I spend so much time alone. And I feel lonely. These walls are starting to feel like Santa Maria's prison. I miss a good time. I need to laugh, I want to dress up and dance, I like to dance.

**SONG: *Life Can Be Lonely***

I LIKE TO DANCE, YES, IT'S TRUE,  
BUT MY HUSBAND FOUND ME OUT WHEN WE CAME TO SAY 'I DO',  
HE WAS FILLING UP WITH DOUBT. AY, AY, AY, AY!  
IF YOUR HOBBY IS TABOO THAT'S YOUR MARRIAGE UP THE SPOUT!

LOVE MAY BE HARD TO EXPLAIN  
AND THEY'LL NEVER UNDERSTAND HOW A WOMAN SUFFERS PAIN  
WHEN SHE WEARS A WEDDING BAND. AY, AY, AY, AY!  
HOW YOUR TEARS WILL FALL LIKE RAIN DANCING ROUND THE BABY GRAND.

LIFE CAN BE LONELY WITH NO-ONE.  
LIFE CAN BE LONELY, YOU THROW ONE DICE AND YOU'LL ONLY COME LAST.  
WISH I COULD DIE! NO! JOY ENTERS SOFTLY ON TIP-TOE,  
JOY ENTERS SOFTLY, I WANT TO DANCE.

SOMEBODY SAID TO MY MAN  
'IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR YOUR BRIDE, WELL, YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE A PLAN,  
GO AND TAKE HER FOR A RIDE. AY, AY, AY, AY!  
YOU'LL DO ANYTHING YOU CAN EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO HIDE.

SO, OFF HE WENT ON HIS QUEST:  
HE DEMANDED BOLEROS, I GAVE IN TO HIS BEHEST  
AND THEN WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE? AY, AY, AY, AY!  
I WAS UTTERLY DEPRESSED AND I PUNCHED HIM ON THE NOSE.

LIFE CAN BE LONELY WITH NO-ONE.  
LIFE CAN BE LONELY, YOU THROW ONE DICE AND YOU'LL ONLY COME LAST.  
WISH I COULD DIE! NO! JOY ENTERS SOFTLY ON TIP-TOE,  
JOY ENTERS SOFTLY, I WANT TO DANCE

**Scene 6: The break-up**

*The researcher dances to 'Life Can Be Lonely'. David interrupts.*

David! La Gitana makes me feel so excited... Her journey reminds me so much of my own... Of course, I know I'm no Republican hero neither making a showbiz career in America, but somehow, she reminds me of who I am. I can understand her hopes, her disappointments, the struggle, the guilt...

David, I want to go to Spain. I want to find out more about the gay artists writing and performing *copla* songs during the dictatorship... I want to understand the meanings, the emotions, how they slipped past the censorship... It would only be a couple of weeks, maybe a month or two if I find a lead... Is there anything wrong? You look upset... Well, I thought it wouldn't be an issue for you...

David, I am a full-time partner, what do you mean by that? But I haven't felt so alive in years, probably since... since I moved to England. You know how I've felt since we moved here... Well, come with me! You've been there before, and you always said you loved it. I know that, I'm not trying to be childish... But I have a... '*corazonada*'... like a premonition, a feeling... a... hunch! A 'haunch'? (*he mispronounces the word various times*) Yes, I have a hunch, and if I don't follow it, I will always wonder.

La Gitana has opened my eyes. Do you know she went back? Yes, to Spain! Despite the political circumstances, despite her comfortable life in America... People told her she would get killed and still, she went back to die... Of course I don't want to die! This is not Franco anymore we're dealing with... Did you know that her Americano also left her? He left her when she decided to go back. Didn't you want to see closer parallels between us?

**SONG: *The Fairly Paid***

I DON'T OWE YOU, I WON'T BEG YOU,  
I'M LEAVING YOU NOW AND SOMEHOW YOU'LL BE FINE.  
WORTH YOUR WEIGHT IN GOLD, YOUR SWEET BODY SIGHING,  
TRY NOT TO BE ANGRY YOU'RE NO LONGER MINE.

I DON'T LOVE YOU, YOU DON'T LOVE ME.  
SO, YOU GAVE YOUR HEART, YES, BUT AT WHAT COST?  
YOU SAY YOU'RE DEFENCELESS, DON'T THROW THAT IN MY FACE,  
WHEN I'M NEXT TO YOU, I'M THE ONE THAT'S LOST.

FAIRLY PAID, YOU HAVE BEEN SO FAIRLY PAID,  
I BOUGHT YOUR KISSES FOR FAME  
AND YOU GAVE YOURSELF TO ME FOR JUST A HANDFUL OF COINS.  
FAIRLY PAID, FAIRLY PAID, YOU GOT WHAT YOU DESERVED.

*NO TE ENGAÑO, QUIERO A OTRA, NO CREAS PORE SO QUE TE TRAICIONÉ.  
NO CAYÓ EN MIS BRAZOS, ME DIO SOLO UN BESO, EL ÚNICO BESO QUE YO NO  
PAGUÉ. NO TE QUIERO, NO ME QUIERAS, ENTRE ESTAS PAREDES DEJO  
SEPULTÁS PENAS Y ALEGRÍAS QUE TE HE DAO Y ME DISTE,  
Y ESAS JOYAS QUE AHORA PA OTRO LUCIRÁS.*

*BIEN PAGÁ, ME LLAMAN LA BIEN PAGÁ PORQUE MIS BESOS COBRÉ  
Y A TI ME SUPE ENTREGAR POR UN PUÑAO DE PARNÉ.  
BIEN PAGÁ, BIEN PAGÁ, BIEN PAGÁ FUISTE MUJER.*

### **Scene 7: The return**

*The researcher speaks to the audience.*

Good morning and thank you for calling me in again. It might surprise you to see me dress like this, but I must confess this is not the first time. After all, it was you who said I was unconventional. I have come to let you know that, regardless of today's outcome, I am going back to Spain. I have several reasons to go back but only one instigator: I need to know what happened to La Gitana. Something tells me I have to go back. She's become a part of me.

When I was a little boy, I wanted to be a *copla* singer. I used to take my mother's fan, her flamenco skirt and impersonate Spanish TV stars like Lola Flores. My father never liked that and so I remember hiding from everybody to try new steps and attires...

England has been a home to me. This last year I have learnt so much about myself: I am starting to understand who I am, who I want to be. I think I am finding my voice. And this is exciting, but I am also sad to leave behind a part of me. My heart is filled with hope and sorrow. In Spanish, we say '*pena*'.

*The actor slowly undresses and becomes once again Federico in Santa María's prison.*

### **SONG: Sorrow**

*SI EN EL FIRMAMENTO PODER YO TUVIERA,  
ESTA NOCHE NEGRA LO MISMO QUE UN POZO,  
CON UN CUCHILLITO DE LUNA LUNERA,  
CORTARÍA LOS HIERROS DE TU CALABOZO.  
SI YO FUERA REINA DE LA LUZ DEL DÍA, DEL VIENTO Y DEL MAR,  
CORDELES DE ESCLAVA YO ME CEÑIRÍA POR TU LIBERTAD.*

*¡AY, PENA, PENITA, PENA -PENA-, PENA DE MI CORAZÓN,  
¡QUE ME CORRE POR LAS VENAS -PENA- CON LA FUERZA DE UN CICLÓN!  
ES LO MISMO QUE UN NUBLADO DE TINIEBLA Y PEDERNAL.  
ES UN POTRO DESBOCADO QUE NO SABE DÓNDE VA.  
ES UN DESIERTO DE ARENA -PENA-, ES MI GLORIA EN UN PENAL.  
¡AY, PENAL! ¡AY, PENAL! ¡AY, PENA, PENITA, PENA!*

I DON'T WANT YOUR FLOWERS, APPLAUSE, OR YOUR MONEY,  
I WANT TO BE FREE, FREE TO CRY FOR YOUR HEARTACHE  
AND BE BY YOUR SIDE WITH YOUR JOY, WITH YOUR AGONY  
AND I'D DRINK YOUR TEARS LIKE THEY CAME FROM A LAKE.  
MY EYES ARE IN PAIN, AS THEY SEARCH BUT DON'T FIND,  
AS YOUR FACE NEVER SHOWS.  
CAN THEY BE TO BLAME FOR YOUR LUCK, SO UNKIND? OH, MY APRIL ROSE...

OH, MY SORROW, MY LITTLE SORROW, SORROW, LITTLE SORROW OF MY  
HEART, LITTLE HOPE FOR OUR TOMORROW, SORROW, CRACKING EVERYTHING  
APART.... LIKE THE SHADOWS RUNNING OVER ROCKY MOUNTAINS, RUNNING  
FAR. LIKE A LITTLE FOAL THAT'S LOST ITS WAY AMONG THE ROCKY PATHS.  
LIKE A CELL WITHOUT A DOOR, OH, SORROW.  
LIKE MY HEART CAN TAKE NO MORE, OH, MY SORROW, MY SADNESS,  
MY PITY, LITTLE SORROW.

### **Scene 8: The letter<sup>2</sup>**

*La Gitana sits in her dressing room and reviews the letter she has just written.*

*'Querido Miguel,*

*Puede que ya no te vuelva a escribir más. Vuelvo a Cádiz a enfrentarme a mis fantasmas. Necesito pisar de nuevo el escenario que una vez me convirtió en La Gitana. Mi americano dice que en España no se nos ha perdido ná, que me quitarán de en medio en una mijita, que nadie puede con Franco. La vida en Nueva York es una maravilla, pero yo no puedo dejar de pensar en los camaradas, en la maldita guerra que lo cambió todo... y siento una extraña necesidad, una urgencia por volver a casa.*

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<sup>2</sup> The scene is performed in Spanish and subtitled as follows: 'Dear Miguel,

This might be the last time I write. I am going back to Cádiz to face my phantoms. I must step onto that Utopia stage again, the place that made me La Gitana that I am today. My Americano says there's nothing left for us in Spain, that they'll get rid of me in a blink, that no-one dares to confront Franco. Though life in New York is a wonder, I can't stop thinking about my comrades and this damned war that destroyed us all... I feel a sudden urge to return home.

I will take my songs with me. Each *copla* symbolizes each and everything that has happened to me over the last few years. These songs are the reflection of the most powerful human emotions. I return to a country of buried emotions by a dictatorship that suppresses anything that has to do with being human. That is why I must take my songs with me. I hope that we see each other again, when this political nonsense called *Franquismo* finally disappears. Until then, I say goodbye with the hope to find you again in this quest to feel alive. Your *Gitana*'

*Conmigo me llevo mis canciones. Cada copla simboliza todas las cosas que me han pasado en estos años. Estas canciones son el reflejo de las emociones humanas más poderosas. Vuelvo a un país de emociones encubiertas por una dictadura empeñada en reprimir todo lo que tenga que ver con ser humano. Por eso debo llevar mis canciones conmigo. Espero que volvamos a vernos en un futuro, cuando todo este disparate del Franquismo haya terminado para siempre. Hasta entonces me despido de ti con la esperanza de volver a encontrarte en esta misión por mantenernos vivos.*

*Tu Gitana'*

*La Gitana grabs her packed suitcase and exits. Blackout.*

### **Scene 9: The final performance**

*There is an announcement: Ladies and Gentlemen, with you all: La Gitana.*

*La Gitana returns to sing the final song.*

#### **SONG: *But I Love You Anyway***

I'VE BEEN TOLD A THOUSAND TIMES NOW  
BUT I NEVER WANTED TO TRULY REALIZE.  
WHEN THE BULLETS REACHED MY HEART  
I ALREADY COULDN'T TAKE YOU APART.  
I WAITED UP HALF THE NIGHT AND NEVER COMPLAINED AT ALL,  
THE ONLY THING I ASKED FOR: A LITTLE PIECE OF YOUR LOVE.  
COVERED WITH YOUR KISSES FEELING HOW THEY STING,  
THOUGH INSIDE I'M DYING, NO ONE HEARS MY CRYING EVERYTIME I SING.

I LOVE YOU MORE THAN MY SIGHT, I LOVE YOU MORE THAN MY LIFE,  
MORE THAN BREATH THAT FILLS MY BODY MORE THAN ANY OTHER CAN.  
AND IF MY LOVE WERE TO STOP, WELL, THEN MY HEART WERE CEASE TO BEAT,  
AND LET THE BELLS RING OUT, SHOUT IT LOUD, PROCLAIM IT IN THE STREET.  
YOU ARE MY VOICE AND MY SILENCE AND I SWEAR TO YOU MY DARLING,  
THOUGH I KNOW I SHOULDN'T LOVE YOU,  
THOUGH I KNOW I SHOULDN'T LOVE YOU,  
I STILL LOVE YOU ANYWAY.

*QUE SE ME PAREN LOS PULSOS SI TE DEJO DE QUERER,  
QUE LAS CAMPANAS ME DOBLEN SI TE FALTO ALGUNA VEZ.  
ERES MI VIDA Y MI MUERTE, TE LO JURO COMPAÑERO,  
NO DEBÍA DE QUERERTE, NO DEBÍA DE QUERERTE,  
Y SIN EMBARGO TE QUIERO.*

## THE COPLA CABARET<sup>1</sup>

*A performer waits for the audience to come in. He is alone on one side of the stage, on a sort of dressing room configuration with a headdress, props and costumes that will be utilised during the show on display.*

### 1. INTRO: WHAT IS COPLA?

**Voiceover from Manuel Rey, Spanish copla singer:** *‘En el momento en que yo me pongo a cantar no soy consciente ni de lo que canto, ni de cómo lo canto, ni lo quiero hacer bonito ni lo quiero hacer feo. Te sale la interpretación’.*<sup>2</sup>

**VIDEO MONTAGE:** *We see three versions of copla song ‘La bien pagá’. First the original Miguel de Molina performance, second, the dramatic adaptation in English for The Copla Musical. Finally, we see a cabaret version, also in English by Spanish singer Martirio.*

**Voiceover from Manuel Rey:** *‘Cuando me pongo a cantar la copla yo siempre digo que se apodera de mí el espíritu de alguna folclórica perdida’.*<sup>3</sup>

### **SONG: LA BIEN PAGA**

*The performer then attempts to replicate all three versions in a remix live with piano and violin accompaniment. He uses props to change character and music style. In the style of Miguel de Molina:*

NÁ TE PIDO, NÁ TE DEBO, ME VOY DE TU VERA, OLVÍDAME YA  
QUE HE PAGAO CON ORO TUS CARNES MORENAS  
NO MALDIGAS, PAYA, QUE ESTAMOS EN PAZ

*In the style of El Americano, in The Copla Musical:*

I DON’T LOVE YOU, YOU DON’T LOVE ME.  
SO, YOU GAVE YOUR HEART, YES, BUT AT WHAT COST?  
YOU SAY YOU’RE DEFENCELESS, DON’T THROW THAT IN MY FACE,  
WHEN I’M NEXT TO YOU, I’M THE ONE THAT’S LOST.

*In the style of Martirio:*

FAIRLY PAID, YOU HAVE BEEN SO FAIRLY PAID,  
I BOUGHT YOUR KISSES FOR FAME  
AND YOU GAVE YOURSELF TO ME FOR JUST A HANDFUL OF COINS.  
FAIRLY PAID, FAIRLY PAID, YOU GOT WHAT YOU DESERVED.

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<sup>1</sup> True to the cabaret nature, the show allows some improvisation and the alteration of some texts as the result of audience interaction.

<sup>2</sup> The voiceovers are translated on the screen as: ‘The moment I start singing I am not aware of what I am singing or how I’m singing it, nor I want to make it pretty or ugly. The acting just comes out’.

<sup>3</sup> ‘When I start singing copla, I always say I am possessed by the spirit of a lost folkloric diva’.

*Copla. Copla.* C-O-P-L-A. Not Aaron Copland, not Cop Land, no Francis Ford Coppola. COPLA. What is *copla*?

For me *copla* is... being Spanish, belonging to Spain even when you've left, it's the past in the present, it's emotions. *Copla* is... being a woman. Being a man. Being a gay man. It's the freedom to be who you want to be: to put on a wig and a pairs of heels and make it seem the most natural thing in the world.

It's a protest. It's an "anti-imperialistic cry": honestly, I don't want to see another musical, I want to sing my *coplas*. It's being tired of Britney Spears, it's even being tired of Mamma Mia. Hey! There is Music beyond the Broadway! And at the same time, it's music I want to bring to Broadway.

It's a tribute. To all the people who fought for the Spain that we have today, who kept our hopes up and gave us tones of poetry.

It's a longing, it's like missing a Spain I haven't even known, and wanting to bring it back... But only the good things.

Now... how can I transfer my passion for *copla* to YOU? How can I make you feel what I feel? How can I make you love *copla* as much as I do? This is an ambitious question, a question I've asked myself for years. And I will try to answer it here. Tonight. With you. (PAUSE)

## 2. THE INFLUENCE OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN MUSICAL.

**Voiceover from Manuel Rey:** *'Como la mayoría de los españoles empecé a ver las producciones de los musicales extranjeros que se hacían en España. Me acuerdo de haber ido a ver Jesucristo Superstar con Camilo Sexto y con Pablo Abraira y de haber ido a ver Evita'*.<sup>4</sup>

When I was 7... I didn't have a real appreciation of *copla* even though it was everywhere (singers appeared on TV, in gossip magazines, etc.). What I really liked were American musicals that I would watch on TV. The musical was a relatively new concept in Spain, it wasn't as big in theatre but everybody knew the movie musicals. Here is one of them, a classic and my favourite one;

### **VIDEO MONTAGE: THE SOUND OF MUSIC**

Does it ring a bell? Does anyone know it? In the Western world, this musical has been a landmark since 1965 and accompanied every child in their upbringing, that's how I learn the song you are about to hear, which makes me feel like a child again. If you know it, sing with me.

*The video goes silent and the piano plays for the audience to sing along:*

Doe-- a deer a female deer

Ray-- a drop of golden sun

Me-- a name I call myself

---

<sup>4</sup> 'Like the majority of Spaniards, I started seeing the foreign musical theatre productions when they arrived to Spain. I remember *Jesus Christ Superstar* with Camilo Sexto and Pablo Abraira, and also seeing *Evita*'.

Far-- a long long way to run  
Sew-- a needle pulling thread  
La-- a note to follow sew  
Tea-- a drink with jam and bread  
That will bring us back to 'Do'... oh oh oh...

Wait! This is not the Julie Andrews I know. The Julie Andrews I know sings in Spanish. The movie I know is not *The Sound of Music*. I've had to look the lyrics we just sang online, and I still struggle to learn them. This is *The Sound of Music* I know. It is called SONRISAS Y LAGRIMAS (literally 'Smiles and Tears').

### **VIDEO MONTAGE: THE SOUND OF MUSIC (SONRISAS Y LÁGRIMAS) IN SPANISH**

I always thought that was the real voice of Julie Andrews. Only years later I learnt that the woman who dubbed Julie Andrews was actually called Teresa María. In the Spain of Franco and still nowadays, every movie, TV show, musical and whatnot is translated and dubbed into Spanish. This created a lot of confusion for me, so picture me being seven with the remote fast and forward to sing the Spanish songs over and over again.

*Once again, the video goes silent and the piano plays for the audience to sing along, this time in Spanish:*

DO(N)- *es trato de varón*

RE(S)- *selvático animal*

MI- *denota posesión.*

FA(R)- *es lejos en inglés*

SOL- *ardiente esfera es*

LA- *al nombre es anterior*

SI- *asentimiento es*

*Y otra vez ya viene el DO.*

When a movie is translated, you would like to think that the Spanish lyrics are the same as the English, but this not necessarily the case, at least not in Spain. We are going to try a little experiment here: the Maestro is going to do live translation of the Spanish lyrics. Are you ready?

*Singing in Spanish → Literal translation from Spanish*

Do- A gentleman's treatment

Re- A jungle animal

Mi- indicates 'my possession'

Fa- In English means 'far'

Sol- A burning sphere

La- Article that precedes the noun

Si- Affirmation, meaning 'yes'.

Do- Still a gentleman's treatment

If at the age of seven I didn't have the opportunity to watch *The Sound of Music* in Spanish, I wouldn't have watched it at all. I could fall in love with it because it was sung in Spanish.

So, what can I do for you to fall in love with *copla* the same way I fell in love with *The Sound of Music*?

- Hire Julie Andrews despite her current nodule problems to sing Spanish *copla*?
- Translate the songs into English so that you can understand the beautiful stories in it?
- Create a musical from these stories? Well, I have actually done that already, and you can check it out in [www.thecoplamusical.com](http://www.thecoplamusical.com)

But the question still remains: How can I share my experience of *copla* with you? What can I do today to make you understand and love a *copla* song?

### 3. SHARING NARRATIVES: TATUAJE

When I was 16, one of my favourite pop idols, Ana Belén, released a *copla* CD called *Tatuaje*. That's the first time I really looked into *copla*. I fell in love with the song *Tatuaje*: 'Tattoo'. What is the amount of passion that fits in a *copla* song? *Copla* songs tell dramatic stories of love, longing, jealousy and strong emotions, where the protagonists are the minorities of the past: gypsies, women, and marginal members of society...

Imagine a decadent, smoky tavern. Imagine a sailor, a mixture of Gene Kelly 'On the town' and Querelle in the Fassbinder movie, both my sexual fantasies. And now imagine a Spanish woman with fishnets and a manila shawl...

#### **SONG: TATUAJE.**

##### *Music intro*

Finally, imagine a port in the South of Spain: a quiet evening, the sky is pink and the streetlights just turned on, and the only the sounds of the sea and the breeze:

EL LLEGÓ EN UN BARCO DE NOMBRE EXTRANJERO

LE ENCONTRÉ EN EL PUERTO UN ATARDECER

A woman of easy virtue wanders the streets looking for her next client. This woman has dreams: she dreams of falling in love. And her dream is about to come true: a foreign sailor, blonde like beer and tanned by the sun arrives in town. He pays for her services but she refuses the money hoping for a night of real love. He can't fall in love with her: his heart was broken by another woman. He's been wounded by an impossible love:

LOOK AT MY CHEST, MY TATTOO,

THE FADED LETTERS OF A NAME.

A MEM'RY OF SOMEONE I KNEW,

SOMEONE WHO SET MY HEART AFLAME.

SHE LOVED ME FIRST, BUT NEVER WAITED.

I WAITED BUT SHE NEVER CAME.

AND NOW INSIDE MY ARM ARE BRAIDED

THE FADED LETTERS OF HER NAME.

The sailor leaves and the woman becomes obsessed with him.

IN THE COOL OF EVENING, I COULD SEE HIM LEAVING  
BACK ABOARD THE STEAMER THAT BROUGHT HIM TO MY SHORES.

She is desperate to find him again and everyday she goes back to the tavern where they first met. She looks for him in every new man she meets, willing to revive those feelings of passion.

I SEARCHED EVERY MARKET, LOOKED IN EVERY TAVERN,  
HOPING JUST FOR SOMETHING: JUST A LITTLE TRACE.

Eventually, another man falls in love with her, but now she can't love him back: she is the one that has been wounded and has marked it on her skin.

LOOK AT MY ARM, MY TATTOO  
THE FADED LETTERS OF A NAME  
A MEM'RY OF SOMEONE I KNEW  
SOMEONE WHO SET MY HEART AFLAME.  
SHE LOVED ME FIRST, BUT NEVER WAITED  
I WAITED BUT SHE NEVER CAME  
AND NOW INSIDE MY ARM ARE BRAIDED  
THE FADED LETTERS OF HER NAME

*Video projection from The Copla Solo in which La Gitana recites the last verses of 'Tattoo' in Spanish. The live performer provides live translation:*

What do you know of this sailor?

Oh tell us, friend, of all you know.

He was so strong and so mysterious.

What is the story of his woe?

*Finally, the performer sings in harmony with La Gitana (played by himself in the video):*

MIRA SU NOMBRE DE EXTRANJERO  
ESCRITO AQUÍ SOBRE MI PIEL  
SI TE LO ENCUENTRAS MARINERO  
DILE QUE YO MUERO POR ÉL.

#### 4. MY SUBVERSIVE WAY

*Copla* has been the voice of the minorities from its origins. Nowadays, it might not seem surprising that the star of 'Tattoo' is a prostitute, but in 1941 it really was shocking. To really get to know *copla* you must understand its subversive potential, its background as a protest song.

One of the marginal collectives that has taken ownership of *copla* especially since the end of Franco's dictatorship are the transvestites: they were the first performers of

*copla*, these songs contained encrypted homosexual messages and still represent the gay community.

*The performer starts applying make-up while he watches a video from copla artist Manuel Rey talking about star impersonators and also applying make-up. By the end of the video, the performer is fully transformed into his drag persona.*

### **VIDEO Manuel Rey (Transcription below):**

Before talking about transvestism, there were 'Star Impersonators': they were men dressed as women that imitated the female voice with their own voices. That's something like what transvestites did with lip-synching in the Chueca area [in Madrid] but they did it with their voices.

It is a very curious thing because some of the big figures of *copla* started as 'stars impersonators'. For example Miguel de Molina started as a 'star impersonator' but even before him there were some really famous ones like Edmond de Bries for whom Alvarito Retana composed *Las tardes del Ritz* originally written to be sung by a woman. The one who performed in the opening night was what nowadays we call a 'transformista', but 'transformista' is the idea of a man who transvestites but it doesn't give us the idea that they were stars dressed as women that modulated the voice so that it seemed a female voice, and they were real mass idols.

One of them even won Miss Germany competition. He was more beautiful than all other contesting women and much more feminine than all of them together. It is something really interesting because 'stars impersonators' were forbidden in the dictatorship, not only Franco's, but also Primo de Rivera's that also banned 'stars impersonators'. They were very in demand by audiences and it is true that they were real mass idols. During the 'Franquismo' they had to reconvert themselves, some of them were still marginalised but some of them became *copla* singers. For example, Miguel de Molina or Tomas de Antequera, who started imitating feminine voices.

You need to be careful with make up because either you put too much or you don't use enough. A little tiling is OK but there's no need of excesses.

*Copla* is very subversive because it talks about adulterer love, homosexual love. *Copla* is full of homosexuality, not just the songs composed by Rafael de Leon for Miguel de Molina, who was like his fetish in that moment. Also, the ones he composed for Concha Piquer. Those dramatic songs sung by that woman who suffers because of the abuse of a man, had indeed a 'gayer' content than what we think... and there was consciousness in the period of Rafael de Leon and Miguel de Molina but after that it was decaffeinated. This is also the reason why *copla* subsisted in the dictatorship and in homosexual environments, where it never lost its validity. Because in the 60s, 70s, 80s, even in the 90s, in the areas of Chueca in Madrid, or in Paralelo in Barcelona, let's say that transvestites sang the songs of Juanita Reina, Paquita Rico, Carmen Sevilla, Lola Flores or indescribable Sara Montiel.

*The performer, in his full drag self prepares to perform his Spanish-flavoured version of 'My Way'. As the song advances, it incorporates some copla and flamenco undertones.*

*Copla subversiva. Subversive copla. It's time to do things my way:*

### **SONG: MY WAY**

And now, the end is near and so I face the final curtain.

My friend, I'll say it clear, I'll state my case, of which I'm certain.

I've lived a life that's full, I travelled each and every highway.  
And more, much more than this, I did it my way.  
Regrets, I've had a few, but then again, too few to mention.  
I did what I had to do and saw it through without exemption.  
I planned each charted course, each careful step along the byway.  
And more, much more than this, I did it my way.  
Yes, there were times, I'm sure you knew.  
When I bit off more than I could chew.  
But through it all, when there was doubt I ate it up and spit it out.  
I faced it all and I stood tall and did it my way.

## 5. BACK TO SPAIN

The rain in Spain stays mainly on the plane. La lluvia en Sevilla es una auténtica. maravilla. *Copla subversiva*. Subversive *copla*. You see, we can adapt both ways. My name is Alejjjandra: I am a PhD, doing PaR, at RCSSD, work in LCM at UWL and my postcode is NW3 6LG. In the UK, ok?

You're welcome to my show, I hope you know. C-O-P-L-A. I sing it my way. I am an intercultural experiment, a victim of globalization. And I love it- But... I have to confess... Can I?

Lately everything reminds me of Spain, Spain is in a lot of Pain. And I am also in pain being away from Spain. I miss my chorizo Revilla, queso Manchego, Flamenco lessons, paella Valenciana, bombero torero, Penélope my sister, mi fiesta y mi siesta, not that siesta... and I miss you (*Interacts with an audience member*).

Look at me! I am here with you trying to make you feel what I feel, is that even possible? Get me my dress, get me my music. Does it make sense to make a life away from the homeland?

*We hear the introduction of Suspiros de España in Spanish*

### **SONG: FAREWELL ESPAÑA**

I'LL SING A SAD LITTLE COPLA WOVEN FROM BREEZES, FROM BREEZES AND SUN.

AND AS I CROSS THE QUIET OCEAN, I SING MY GOODBYE TO ONE.  
FAREWELL, ESPAÑA, DEAR HOMELAND, THE COUNTRY WHERE I WAS BORN.  
SO BEAUTIFUL AND SO (VERY) GRAND, A ROSEBUD WITHOUT A THORN.  
AY, AY, AY ALL OF THIS SORROW I FEEL; I COULD DIE IF I LEAVE YOU BEHIND.

**ALL:** I'LL (WE'LL/YOU'LL) SING A SAD LITTLE COPLA WOVEN FROM BREEZES, FROM BREEZES AND SUN. AS I CROSS THE QUIET OCEAN, I SING MY GOODBYE TO ONE.

**CAMPANERA:** LIGHTS IN THE DISTANCE ARE FADING, ESPAÑA, LAND OF MY LOVE

AND STILL MY POOR HEART IS ACHING, AND CRYING TO GOD ABOVE

**ALL:** LEAVING YOUR GREEN GRASS, YOUR SOFT SAND THAT I'VE WALKED MY WHOLE LIFE LONG. FAREWELL, ESPAÑA, MY HEARTLAND, FOR YOU, WE GIVE UP OUR SONG.

IT'S MORE THAN I HOPE TO UNDERSTAND, TO LEAVE YOU, WHERE I BELONG. ESPAÑA, MY HEART, MY HOMELAND, MY LAST GOODBYE.

My heart is divided. This song was written in 1954 and still moves me. It is very powerful for me. I still don't know if it makes sense building a life in England. I can't answer my own question. I miss Spain, but sometimes I feel I don't belong there anymore.

Once you've left, you're in between.

I am IN BETWEEN: in between Frank Sinatra and the Gypsy Kings, in between Julie Andrews and Ana Belén, in between the Spanish prostitute of Tattoo and her foreign sailor, in between the old and the new... in between countries, in between genres, in between genders, in between stories, in between passions.

*Copla* is for everyone that feels in between. It's survived in between political factions, it's expressed passions in between lovers, it was born in between Flamenco and Zarzuela... written in between countries... and now I am placing here it in between cultures, in between you and me.

**Quote on screen:** *'As many others who have left their native country, I can have at least two identities, take part in or distance myself from two cultures, and cherish or dread the experience, depending on circumstances or mood'* (Frantisek Deak: *A reflection on cross-cultural experience*, 1989)<sup>5</sup>

## 6. EPILOGUE

### **KARAOKE SONG: LA BIEN PAGA (In between styles)**

*The performer invites the audience to sing along:*

I DON'T OWE YOU, I WON'T BEG YOU,  
I'M LEAVING YOU NOW AND SOMEHOW YOU'LL BE FINE.  
WORTH YOUR WEIGHT IN GOLD, YOUR SWEET BODY SIGHING,  
TRY NOT TO BE ANGRY YOU'RE NO LONGER MINE.  
I DON'T LOVE YOU, YOU DON'T LOVE ME.  
SO, YOU GAVE YOUR HEART, YES, BUT AT WHAT COST?  
YOU SAY YOU'RE DEFENCELESS, DON'T THROW THAT IN MY FACE,  
WHEN I'M NEXT TO YOU, I'M THE ONE THAT'S LOST.  
*BIEN PAGÁ*, YOU HAVE BEEN SO FAIRLY PAID,  
I BOUGHT YOUR KISSES FOR FAME  
AND YOU GAVE YOURSELF TO ME FOR JUST A HANDFUL OF COINS.  
*BIEN PAGÁ, BIEN PAGÁ, BIEN PAGÁ FUISTE MUJER.*

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<sup>5</sup> Full reference: Deak, Frantisek (1989). 'Yaqui Easter: a reflection on cross-cultural experience' in *Performing Arts Journal*, 11/12, pp. 69-83.

## APPENDIX C: SAMPLE OF AUDIENCE EVALUATIONS

### Sample 1: *The Copla Musical* Feedback<sup>1</sup>

Age / Sex / Nationality

58/M/UK

What did you enjoy about the performance?

The performer acted very well and was very strong musically. The musical accompaniment was also very good, especially the violin.

What do you think about the story? Did anything about it confuse you?

Would you like to know more about any storyline during the performance: the researcher's, La Gitana's or Copla history in general?

I enjoyed the originality of the story and the way it was told and would certainly like to know more. I understood most of the story, though perhaps not all the detail.

Did you know anything about Copla before coming to *The Copla Musical*? After seeing the show, what is coming out as your understanding of Copla?

I didn't know much about Copla and am a bit clearer following this performance.

What did you think of the combination of Spanish and English in the show and in particular in Copla songs? Did you appreciate that subtitles were provided and were they adequate?

The English/ Spanish mix was great and that mix also integrated the subtitles into the show

How did you find out about the performance?

On the internet.

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<sup>1</sup> The sample presented in this appendix is from the performances at the Barcelona Solo Festival (2<sup>nd</sup>- 5<sup>th</sup> November 2016), an international festival with a balanced presence of Anglo-speaking and Spanish-speaking audiences. The performance was mainly in English with some sections in Spanish and subtitles for both languages. A total of 50 audience members completed the anonymous survey after seeing the performances, which adds to a total of 500 audience evaluation surveys completed in previous performances of both *The Copla Musical* and *The Copla Solo*.

## Sample 2: *The Copla Musical* Feedback

Edad/ Sexo/ Nacionalidad

31/ mujer/ española

¿Qué aspecto de la representación te ha gustado o conmovido más?

La parte que más me gusto fueron los momentos de interpretación de ensoñación del protagonista. También la interacción con los músicos

¿Qué opinas de la historia, te pareció confusa? ¿Te gustaría que la obra hablara más sobre La Gitana, el investigador o el contexto de la copla en general, o piensas que el contenido está equilibrado?

Ya había visto otras versiones del show, y por ello esta ha contextualizado todo lo que ocurrió. Para ser una obra de 60 minutos, me pareció equilibrado

¿Conocías la copla antes de ver el espectáculo? ¿Qué impresión te dieron las canciones en inglés?

Si, la conocía porque familiarmente les gusta mucho a toda mi familia. Me gusto la traducción que hizo el guionista de la obra, pues era bastante ajustado a la idea original de las canciones.

¿Cómo recibiste la combinación de inglés y español? ¿Eran adecuados los subtítulos?

A veces algo desfasados, pero creo que sí recogían la idea de la copla a la que se referían

¿Encuentras alguna diferencia entre *The Copla Musical* y otros musicales?

La diferencia es que con esta interpretación, traducción y contextualización, no había visto ninguna obra similar, que sea capaz de llevar a publico extranjero al mundo coplero.

### Sample 3: *The Copla Musical* Feedback

Age / Sex / Nationality

64/M/British

What did you enjoy about the performance?

The performer's expressivity and commitment. And his/her joy! I also loved the stripped-back music – there is something vulnerable and earnest about a solitary violin which lends itself perfectly to an emotional story – and there were moments in the piano playing which made me smile as they were so appropriate. I think the musical accompaniment was just right – more musicians would ironically reduce the effect.

What do you think about the story? Did anything about it confuse you?

Would you like to know more about any storyline during the performance: the researcher's, La Gitana's or Copla history in general?

The character's difficulty with his father was well done – this is something which touches most of us. The draw for La Gitana to return home, despite the risks, was moving, especially given the loss of her partner. Yes, I'd be interested to learn more about the story – it would be good to read the text, if it is available in English?

Did you know anything about Copla before coming to *The Copla Musical*? After seeing the show, what is coming out as your understanding of Copla?

No, I did not. I now realise that these are gypsy songs about people who are (or whose acts make them) outside of normal society.

What did you think of the combination of Spanish and English in the show and in particular in Copla songs? Did you appreciate that surtitles were provided and were they adequate?

This was very clever. I especially liked the performers clear enunciation of Spanish because although I have no knowledge of the language, I enjoyed hearing the sounds. Spanish is usually spoken very quickly and I hadn't realised how beautiful the sounds were before. The use of surtitles in both languages was an inspired idea and was very effective.

How did you find out about the performance?

It was a part of the Barcelona Solo project which I wanted to support.

Do you find any differences between *The Copla Musical* and mainstream Musical Theatre?

Yes. I generally don't like mainstream musicals as the drama is interrupted by the songs. But here they were integral to the story, so they appeared seamless.

#### Sample 4: *The Copla Musical* Feedback

Age / Sex / Nationality

28 / Male / Swedish

What did you enjoy about the performance?

I particularly enjoyed the songs and how they were performed. There were also several elements of the story I really enjoyed.

What do you think about the story? Did anything about it confuse you?

Would you like to know more about any storyline during the performance: the researcher's, La Gitana's or Copla history in general?

The story was interesting and there were no majorly confusing elements to it. It took a little bit of time to completely figure out the narrative, but I would say that is part of the experience. I was intrigued to find out more about La Gitana's and Copla in general, which I guess means that those elements were conveyed in a very capturing way.

Did you know anything about Copla before coming to *The Copla Musical*? After seeing the show, what is coming out as your understanding of Copla?

I knew a little bit about Copla before coming to the show and definitely left the show knowing more about what it is and its history. I understand it as a music style with deep roots in Spanish culture and with a complicated relationship to the Franco years. The songs are often very beautiful.

What did you think of the combination of Spanish and English in the show and in particular in Copla songs? Did you appreciate that subtitles were provided and were they adequate?

To me the combination worked well, without causing distraction. The subtitles were useful – it would probably have been hard to follow the full story without them.

How did you find out about the performance?

A friend's recommendation.

Do you find any differences between *The Copla Musical* and mainstream Musical Theatre?

The story in 'The Copla Musical' is more multifaceted than it generally is in mainstream Musical Theatre and the style more subtle.

### Sample 5: *The Copla Musical* Feedback

Edad/ Sexo/ Nacionalidad

41/varón/española

¿Qué aspecto de la representación te ha gustado o conmovido más?

La identificación de la música y coplas que no escuchaba desde la niñez con la copla en inglés, la emoción el cambio idiomático.

¿Qué opinas de la historia, te pareció confusa? ¿Te gustaría que la obra hablara más sobre La Gitana, el investigador o el contexto de la copla en general, o piensas que el contenido está equilibrado?

La historia se entiende perfectamente (a ello contribuye el folleto que acompañó a todas las actuaciones del Barcelona Solo Festival) así como los carteles de la propia obra en castellano e inglés facilitados por la productora. Quizá habría que dar más “esencia” a la contraparte en el escenario del investigador, ya que en un primer momento queda algo en el aire si habla consigo mismo o con su pareja. Evidentemente, como Manuel Blesa señaló al terminar (músico y pintor con gran conocimiento de la copla) se puede ampliar el contexto de la copla.

¿Conocías la copla antes de ver el espectáculo? ¿Qué impresión te dieron las canciones en inglés?

La conocía, aunque he de reconocer que no es mi género musical favorito. La cantaban mis abuelas, las vecinas, cuando era niño. Me trae muy buenos recuerdos y sí que he tenido – y tengo – amigos que son entusiastas y auténticos conocedores de la copla. El trabajar en una sociedad cultural como El Retiro de Sitges me ha permitido también acceder a programas antiguos. Su traducción al inglés, impecable, no sólo en la forma, sino en el fondo (transmiten la misma emoción que sus originales en castellano).

¿Cómo recibiste la combinación de inglés y español? ¿Eran adecuados los subtítulos?

La coordinación era perfecta en el subtítulo y en el discurso del protagonista. Solamente apuntar que quizá hubiera sido positivo incidir en que era subtitulada, pues muchos espectadores que no entienden el inglés quizá se vieron frenados a la hora de acudir a verla. Después de un Festival Internacional de Cinema Fantàstic en que pudimos ver películas en original coreano (subtitulada al inglés, castellano y catalán a la vez) hace del público de Sitges un público que incluso en las proyecciones del cine El Retiro optan por la VOSE. (Otra posibilidad hubiera sido subtitulara en castellano-catalán).

¿Encuentras alguna diferencia entre *The Copla Musical* y otros musicales?

Creo que la publicidad e identificación de “The Copla Musical” es demasiado simplista: es MÁS que un musical (que lo es, con números perfectos, voz y acompañamiento musical), una obra de teatro muy bien interpretada, además de un “espectáculo escénico” que aúna investigación, teatro, musical, denuncia social y de género. Por ejemplo, se la recomendaría a algún amigo al que NO le gusten los musicales y a los más puristas del género.

### Sample 6: *The Copla Musical* Feedback

Age / Sex / Nationality

52/M/UK

What did you enjoy about the performance?

This was a fascinating story well staged and sung with excellent musical accompaniment.

What do you think about the story? Did anything about it confuse you?

Would you like to know more about any storyline during the performance: the researcher's, La Gitana's or Copla history in general?

The story was important and well worth telling. Occasionally it was slightly confusing, but this was not a significant problem and sometimes I felt we could be shown more rather than being told it.

Did you know anything about Copla before coming to *The Copla Musical*? After seeing the show, what is coming out as your understanding of Copla?

Very little and I understand a bit more now.

What did you think of the combination of Spanish and English in the show and in particular in Copla songs? Did you appreciate that surtitles were provided and were they adequate?

The combination of English and Spanish in the show was a real strength and the subtitles worked very well indeed.

How did you find out about the performance?

Web

Do you find any differences between *The Copla Musical* and mainstream Musical Theatre?

### Sample 7: *The Copla Musical* Feedback

Edad/ Sexo/ Nacionalidad

60/ varón/Española

¿Qué aspecto de la representación te ha gustado o conmovido más?

La mezcla de los dos personajes al tiempo (investigador/Gitana) me parece que está muy bien llevada. Me parece interesante.

¿Qué opinas de la historia, te pareció confusa? ¿Te gustaría que la obra hablara más sobre La Gitana, el investigador o el contexto de la copla en general, o piensas que el contenido está equilibrado?

No, la historia se entiende muy bien. Y, efectivamente, puede ser la historia de cualquier artista, pensador o cualquier persona de la cultura que no pensara igual que el régimen político de la época. Creo que hablar un poco más de la Copla no estaría de más; aunque en general, creo que está bastante bien compensada.

¿Conocías la copla antes de ver el espectáculo? ¿Qué impresión te dieron las canciones en inglés?

Sí. Las canciones... no sé . Nada que decir.

¿Cómo recibiste la combinación de inglés y español? ¿Eran adecuados los subtítulos?

Muy bien, aunque en algún momento se produce un pequeño desajuste con los subtítulos. En general bien.

¿Encuentras alguna diferencia entre *The Copla Musical* y otros musicales?

La principal diferencia que encuentro, al menos con las que yo conozco, es que no conozco ningún musical hecho en monólogo como es este. Para mí es una novedad en el género musical.

### Sample 8: *The Copla Musical* Feedback

Age / Sex / Nationality

65/ male/ British

What did you enjoy about the performance?

The whole thing! A very interesting and plausible story line. The acting which was believable, with feeling, good movement around the stage, a lovely singing voice, and good use of the two musicians.

What do you think about the story? Did anything about it confuse you?

Would you like to know more about any storyline during the performance: the researcher's, La Gitana's or Copla history in general?

I, and others in the audience, actually thought that the story was true. Very well written.

Did you know anything about Copla before coming to *The Copla Musical*? After seeing the show, what is coming out as your understanding of Copla?

I knew a little, but this show entices you to learn more about la Copla as a musical format.

What did you think of the combination of Spanish and English in the show and in particular in Copla songs? Did you appreciate that surtitles were provided and were they adequate?

I thought the combination of the two languages was thoughtful, although the copla singing came over better in Spanish, naturally. The subtitling was good.

How did you find out about the performance?

Local advertising, done personally, as well as through the Gay Sitges Link Association.

Do you find any differences between *The Copla Musical* and mainstream Musical Theatre?

The mainstream musical theatre which I have seen has been on a much bigger scale, nothing as intimate and convincing as "La Copla". A superb piece of musical theatre which could travel around the world!