

The use of Spanish popular songs as a weapon during the war: popular songs *versus* military hymns



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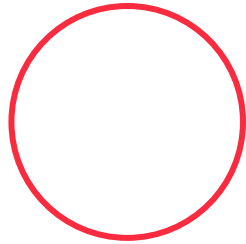
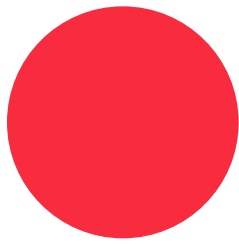
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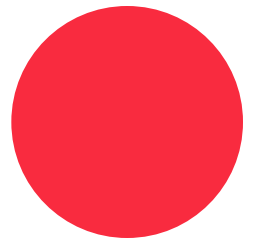
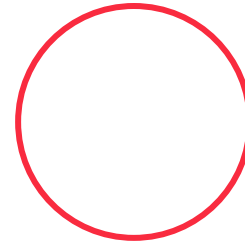
ABSTRACT



- During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), lots of popular songs were used in films, always as **diegetic music**, performed by famous actress called **folklóricas**.
- With the analysis of several musical numbers from different musical films of that period, we can check two distinct realities intrinsically representing the social and cultural change during that battle, where musical films had a clear lead role popularizing songs.:
 - 1) the song starring *aflemencado* style, the most reactionary element to any changes, a feature Spanish cultural identity; they represent the most popular Spanish musical films symbolizing the "Spanish soul", always sang by famous Spanish actors and actress
 - 2) military hymns, characteristic of the several countries which helped simultaneously the two bands during the Spanish civil war, with strong rhythms and texts, most of them sang by anonymous chorus, translating "international" texts into Spanish symbolizing the new social change.
- Which kind of popular music did win the war? Did it return the popular song to the real "Spanish soul" in those musical films performed by the most famous *folklóricas* of that period, Imperio Argentina or Estrellita Castro? We can have to look at several musical numbers in Spanish cinema of the 20s and 30s to confirm the **evolution of popular song and musical number** in Spain in that period and to see the **protagonism** of the **contrafacted text** during the three years of the war.



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1) Spanish popular songs in Spanish films in the 30s and 40s: the era of *folklóricas*

- What is the concept of a *folklórica* singer in the Spanish films of the 30s?
- Is the *folklórica* popular song anonymous or is composed by famous musicians?
- Is there a musical number in these films?
- Why the same *folklórica* song is on films of 30s and 40s (before and after Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939)

1.1. What is the concept of a *folklórica* singer in the Spanish films of the 30s?

- A singer who performs a folk song closer to *flamenco* style, with Andalusian accent and words
- There are several Spanish films of these characteristics in the 30s:
 - Directed by Florián Rey and Benito Perojo
 - Main roles by: Imperio Argentina, Miguel Ligero, Estrellita Castro o Concha Piquer

Examples of Imperio Argentina (1906-2003):

- *La hermana San Sulpicio* (1927)
- *Los claveles de la Virgen* (1929)
- *Su noche de bodas* (1931)
- *Melodías de Arrabal* (1933)
- *Morena clara* (1936)
 - Sequence of Coplas by Imperio Argentina in *La hermana San Sulpicio* (1927) and “Échale guindas al pavo” with Manuel ligero in *Morena clara* (1936)

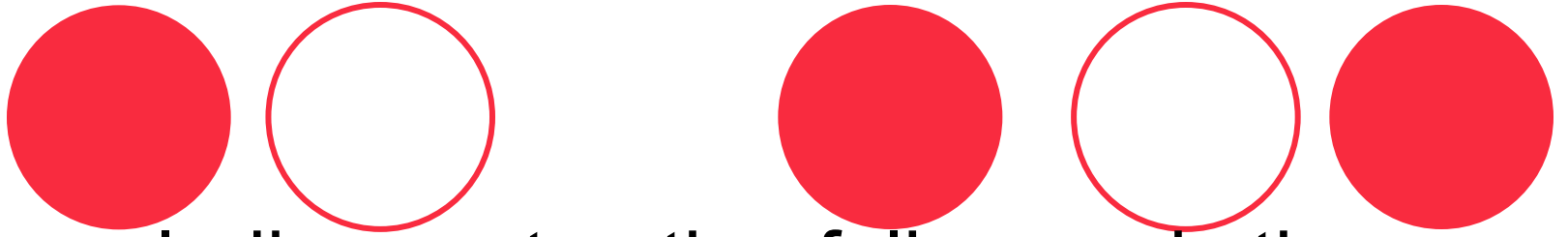


1.2. Is the *folklórica* popular song anonymous or is composed by famous musicians?

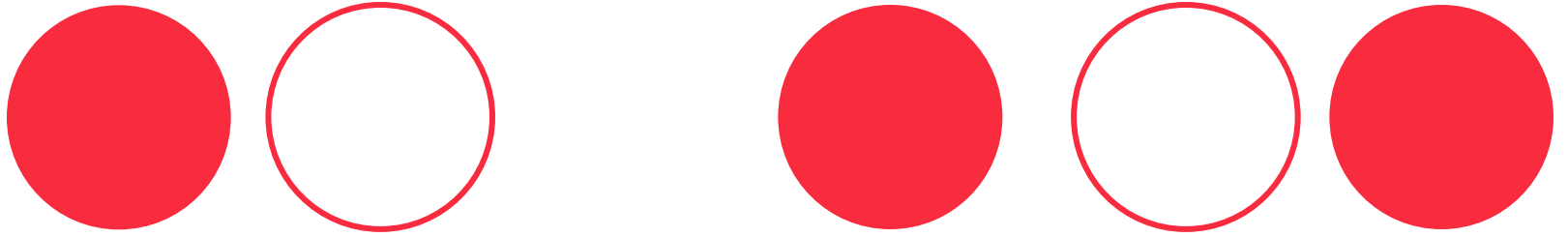
- In Spanish film music, with the name of *folklórica* popular song is denominated different kinds of popular tunes: tonadilla, copla, pasodoble
- Usually the composers of music and texts are not famous (comparing with the American composers Porter, Berlin, Kern o Gershwin)

1.3. Is there a musical number in these films?

- The musical number is usually the type “show musical”: the performances by the protagonists in the script are justified because the performance is meta-narrative and musical numbers are argumentative
- The singers implement their alterity in and out of the stage and give maximum credibility to the musical number
- This Spanish show musical number has its roots in popular forms as zarzuela, copla, etc



- The melodic construction folk song is the centerpiece on which turns the the metatextual musical number, which is directly involved in the audibility of the viewer about the feelings of the protagonists
- This expressive music moves from merely descriptive to narrative, the audience interacts with the protagonists of the musical number, hoping to resolve the internal or external conflicts of the singers



- The essential elements which define the genre is not the glamour of the costumes or the tap dancing of the choreography (as in the USA musical numbers), but the solidity of a musical number which subsist with a popular songs that help to the audience to believe the argument of the film

1.4. Why the same *folklórica* song is on films of 30s and 40s (before and after Spanish Civil War)

- There are two commercial elements which determinate the continuity of *folklórica* songs for films after the Spanish civil war:
 - The German-Spanish film studios “Hispano Film-Produktion”
 - The Latin American audience

a) The German-Spanish film studios “Hispano Film-Produktion”

- During the Civil War the main Spanish producers outside Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, without technical means to make good films, looked for help outside Spain. They found in Germany a partner
- In March 1937 it was registered in Berlin the Hispanic Film Produktion, directed by Johann Wenzel Ther (who belonged to the Nazi Party and worked for film activities in Spain from the 30s).
- In July 1937, it established the National Film distributor SA, on whose board of directors is Florian Rey; it focused on war films and documentaries and fiction films, especially where they act musical stars of the moment:
 - *Carmen la de Triana* (1938, Imperio Argentina) and *La canción de Aixa* (1939, Imperio Argentina) by Florián Rey
 - *El barbero de Sevilla* (1938, Estrellita Castro), *Suspiros de España* (idem) and *Mariquilla Terremoto* (idem) by Benito Perojo

Examples of Imperio Argentina and Estrellita Castro (1914-1983) after the Spanish Civil War

- *Carmen la de Triana* (1938)
- *Suspiros de España* (1939)
 - Sequence of pasodoble in *Suspiros de España*



b) The Latin American audience

- An important element of Spanish musical characterization of the 40s was its diffusion in Latin America, road necessary to prevent the economic collapse of Spain in the postwar
- Due to course which they opened at the early 40s the musical films by Imperio Argentina and Estrellita Castro in Spanish speaking countries, singers as Sara Montiel, Paquita Rico and Lola Flores were a succes with their songs in films and with tours of their performances in major cities of these countries

Examples of Paquita Rico and Lola Flores in the 50s

- Sequence of *Aeropuerto* (1953) by Juanita Reina
- Sequence of *La niña de la Venta* (1951) by Lola Flores



2) Spanish popular military hymns songs during 1936-39 and later: symbolizing the new social change

- International songs and hymns, characteristic of the several countries with strong rhythms and texts, symbolizing the new social change
- Films sponsored by the Sindicato Nacional del Espectáculo, unions as CNT, UGT, FAI

DIAZ VIANA, Luis: *Canciones populares de la Guerra Civil*. Madrid, Taurus, 1985, pp. 24-26.

- Especialmente en el **bando republicano**, se cantarían **viejas canciones tradicionales con nuevas letras**, produciéndose así una cierta **revitalización de este Folklore**. Muchas veces encontraremos que una misma música se cantaba con gran número de estrofas distintas, como es el caso de las melodías del "Vito" o "Los cuatro muleros" -recogida esta última por García Lorca- que fueron objeto de muy variadas versiones. Canciones que se habían cantado en la guerra de Marruecos se volvieron a cantar, también, en la guerra civil española.
- En el **bando nacional** abundan las composiciones de **origen culto** -es decir, de poetas y músicos conocidos- cuyo estilo, métrica y melodías no son tradicionales (...) ya que se deben a la inspiración creadora de un individuo y no a la refundición popular de nuevas letras en viejas músicas. Así, por ejemplo, se aprecia que la métrica, frecuentemente octosilábica en las canciones de la zona republicana es, sin embargo, en éstas, muy variada y compleja, combinando versos cortos con largos; en cuanto a la rima, suele tender al consonantismo, no a la asonancia de los versos pares que es la rima que generalmente aparece en las otras y en las canciones tradicionales.

- Los **himnos**, se hicieron 'populares' a la fuerza; es decir, que alcanzaron una enorme difusión, al margen de si gustaban a la gente o no -en algunos casos seguro que no- porque representaban a los grupos vencedores y éstos los impusieron oficialmente. / Igual de 'cultos' -en el sentido que antes hemos dicho- y de ajenos a moldes tradicionales eran algunos himnos o marchas que se cantaban en la zona republicana; muchos de ellos se popularizaron con la llegada de las brigadas internacionales: "la Guardia Roja", "La Joven Guardia", "La Internacional" .../
- (...) Canciones de un bando fueron cantadas en el otro con la **letra cambiada**, de modo que se consiguiera el efecto de ridiculizar aquello que la composición representaba o expresaba primeramente. (...)
- Algunas canciones que podríamos denominar de moda fueron adoptadas por los combatientes de uno y otro lado, politizándose el cuplé y el chotis; al "No pasarán" republicano se opondría después el "Hemos pasao", castizo y cupleril que haría fortuna nada más terminada la contienda. (...)
- Las canciones de uno y otro bando son parte del arte generado por dos grupos o facciones que se consideraron lo suficientemente diferentes e irreconciliables como para enfrentarse en una lucha despiadada. En cuanto que una vertiente de ese arte, oral o escrito, semiculto popular o tradicional, halló, en muchos de los casos aquí contenidos, múltiple expresión anónima en el espacio y en el tiempo, podemos hablar de un Folklore procedente de dos 'folks' o grupos y seguir el rastro de la creación y transformación de algunos de estos temas. (...) Definimos lo folklórico (...) por ser código expresivo y manifestación concreta de una colectividad, arte no individual ni concluso, de particular estructura, abierta a la transformación, que adopta distintas formas y versiones

3) Protagonism of the musical numbers in the Spanish cinema during the three years of the civil war

- What is the concept of an integrated musical number?
- Had they represented a fashionable element in musical films in those days?

3.1. What is the concept of an integrated musical number?

- “An integrated musical has musical and non-musical sequences that share an internal narrative logic and such dissolve the distinction between narrative and number. Songs appear to arise “naturally”, with or without the demand for plausible justification, and often serve a central purpose in the evolution of the plot”. *Cfr. HERZOG, Amy (2010). Dreams of Difference. Songs of the Same. The Musical Moment in Film (205). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 5-11.*

Musical form for those Spanish popular songs in the musical number

- Refrain+strophes
- Musically ABA and variations
- Expressive orchestrations adapting the ethos of the instruments to the demanding of the musical film
- Texts songs for making integrated musical numbers
- Popularization of these songs in Europe with the Spanish emigration to Germany, France and Switzerland

**THANKS VERY
MUCH**

