

OPERA IN CONTENTION:  
SOCIAL CONFLICT IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY MEXICO CITY

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## ABSTRACT

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(Under the direction of Dr. David García)

While opera in the nineteenth-century was largely centered in Europe, one significant secondary hub of operatic activity existed in Mexico City. Mexico City's musical and theatrical scene included Mexican companies, as well as troupes from Europe, Cuba, and elsewhere, which performed a wide range of genres, from tragic plays and zarzuelas (Spanish musical theater) to Italian romantic operas and French comic operas. The ways in which the leading singers, Mexican and European composers, and individual works in the opera scene reflected dialogues about the dominant constructions of gender, race, and nationality help to explain the role opera culture played in the relationship between European and Mexican elements in Mexican society and Mexican opera traditions.

The Mexico City opera scene was an arena of experimentation in which individual operas, their composers, and performers both challenged and reinforced racial and gender ideologies, as well as foreign influences. For example, the depiction of the Aztec hero Cuauhtémoc as a quasi-European "civilized" hero in the Mexican composer Aniceto Ortega's opera *Guatimotzín* (1871), demonstrates ambiguities and contradictions in conceptions of *mestizaje*, or racial mixture, and its implications for perceptions of Mexican history. Musical and textual influences evident in *Guatimotzín* and another Mexican opera from this period,

Melesio Morales's *Ildegonda* (1866), highlight the debate concerning the role of Mexican heritage in Mexico's future. And, among performers, the reception and literary depictions of Spanish cancan dancer Amalia Gómez, Mexican soprano Angela Peralta, and Italian tenor Enrico Tamberlick illustrate how individuals could overcome obstacles presented by discourses of femininity and masculinity by emphasizing unconventional professional and personal choices. Mexican operas, such as *Guatimotzín* and *Ildegonda*, along with singers and dancers in Mexico City opera productions, highlight the role of opera culture in the larger dialogue between European and Mexican influences in efforts to "civilize" the Mexican nation.



To my friends and family.  
I could not have made it through without you.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: THE DIVERSE MEXICO CITY MUSICAL STAGE, 1867-1890

Opera and zarzuela composers and performers in Mexico City engaged in reinforcing, challenging, and transforming racial and gender ideals and expectations, as well as competing notions of what constituted the new Mexican “nation” and “identity.” Despite increasingly fluid racial and ethnic boundaries, along with the rise of racially mixed elites, conceptions of racial difference in late nineteenth-century Mexico remained based on colonial racial and social structures. Opera and zarzuela performers participated in the construction of racial differences and identities and in the shifting of conceptions of gender roles. For instance while women were still expected to remain at home caring for their family members, women who performed on stage, such as opera singers, could maintain respectable reputations. As a result of changes in societal perceptions of race and gender, contradictions and ambiguities came to define cultural and status hierarchies. This ambivalence was evident in a variety of staged musical productions imported from Europe, and in representations of female and male performers in Mexico City.

After 1867 Mexico started to recover from the French occupation under the leadership of Benito Juárez, recently elected to a third term as President. He had previously been interim President from 1858–61 and President from 1861–65. This second presidency was then interrupted by the French invasion after Mexican Imperialist exiles in Europe allied

with Napoleonic France in order to establish a monarchy in Mexico in order to stabilize the country and protect European investments. After the Mexican forces expelled the French monarch and his army in 1867, Juárez reclaimed his position as President. In an effort to reform Mexico and build its infrastructure, Juárez continued his Liberal agenda, which included limiting the power of the Church and expanding individuals' rights.<sup>1</sup> Juárez and his successor Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada (1872–76) sought to create a Mexican citizenry based on the European model by increasing educational opportunities especially for women and indigenous populations.<sup>2</sup> Juárez's emphasis on broadening education developed as the result of collaboration between intellectuals and politicians whose goal was to help Mexicans, and particularly indigenous peoples, to attain liberty, order, and progress.<sup>3</sup> While most looked favorably on Juárez's plan to educate indigenous populations, many debated the purpose of women's education. Some worried that strengthening women's education would push more middle and upper-class women to work outside of the home and/or to neglect their responsibilities at home. This period was marked by intense disagreements about woman's position in Mexican society as intellectual, cultural, and social forces both reinforced and transformed gender norms and gender relations.

Both during and after the French occupation, Mexican elites and intellectuals sought to model their tastes and values on those of Europe, which they viewed as "refined" and

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Weeks, *The Juárez Myth in Mexico* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1987), 46.

<sup>2</sup> Anna Macias, "Mexican Women in the Social Revolution" (Paper delivered at the American Historical Association's Annual Meeting in New York, 1971), 10, 14; quoted in Vivian M. Vallens, *Working Women in Mexico During the Porfiriato, 1880–1910* (San Francisco: R&E Research Associates, 1978), 13.

<sup>3</sup> Vallens, *Working Women*, 14.

“civilized.” For example, upper-class women considered dresses imported from Paris the utmost in both luxury and style.<sup>4</sup> By fostering an image of the French elite in Mexico, Mexican intellectuals, politicians and their families sought to forge a new path towards acceptance by upper-class Mexican (and European) society. They also wanted to prove the cultural and political legitimacy of Mexican participation in a transnational Eurocentric sphere after the occupation. The process of civilization would make it possible for Mexico to join what the upper classes and intellectuals saw as “modern” European culture.

The focus on “Europeanizing” Mexico expanded under Porfirio Díaz (1876–1880, 1884–1910) and Miguel Gonzalez (1880–1884), who sought to modernize and “civilize” Mexican society through European and American investments, importing and replicating European ideals and culture, as well as encouraging European immigration, especially from France, Spain, and Italy. These immigrants would provide a “civilizing influence” on *mestizo* and indigenous peoples by “whitening” the Mexican population through *mestizaje*, the process of racial mixture between Europeans and indigenous Mexicans, and by serving as examples of proper taste and values.<sup>5</sup> These “civilizing” efforts were particularly significant for upper-class women, whose tastes in the arts and fashion, as well as moral values, were seen as models of Mexico’s social and cultural potential. This process also included reframing Mexican history as “Western” by, for example, depicting important indigenous figures as gentlemanly and heroic, which can be seen in the portrayal of the Aztec emperor Cuauhtémoc in Aniceto Ortega’s opera *Guatimotzín*. Touring Italian opera, French opera,

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<sup>4</sup> For example, see the following fashion columns: *El Monitor Republicano*, 31 December 1886, 2 January 1887, 9 January 1887.

<sup>5</sup> Jürgen Buchenau, “Small Numbers, Great Impact: Mexico and Its Immigrants.” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 20, no. 3 (2001): 31–32.

and Spanish zarzuela troupes became cultural ambassadors, and intellectuals and politicians viewed their performances as “civilizing” educational experiences for Mexican audiences.

This dissertation documents and analyzes how and why composers and performers, as well as musical works in the opera scene, negotiated these prevalent ideologies of racial difference, gender expectations, and cultural status in Mexico City. Though individual composers and performers rarely expressed specific opinions of these societal structures, the ways in which critics described these aspects of opera and zarzuela and their participants illustrate widespread influence of these conceptions of societal hierarchies. Such staged representations, therefore, reflected the privileging of Europe in Mexican culture, as well as conceptions of masculinity and femininity, beauty, and the importance of gaining acceptance by representatives of European opera.

Operas and zarzuelas illuminate intersections of prevalent conceptions of race, gender, and national identity in a variety of ways. For example, musical styles and influences in operas by Mexican composers demonstrate the extent to which they sought to emulate established European composers and their works, or subvert the values of Mexican elites. Operas and zarzuelas can also reflect the perceived value of European music and culture in constructing a “Mexican” style of opera. I examine these genres in the context of late nineteenth-century Mexico by comparing the experiences and representations of opera performers, as well as operas by Mexican composers, Melesio Morales’s *Ildegonda* and Aniceto Ortega’s *Guatimotzín*.

Literary depictions in opera and zarzuela librettos also illustrate a variety of relationships to prevalent ideologies. When writing an opera, did the composer or librettist choose to set a text in Italian, reflecting influence from the dominant Italian school, or

Spanish, considered a vernacular language in Mexico? They also made decisions concerning the descriptions and portrayals of individual characters that position them within existing societal structures, such as Ortega's representation of the last Aztec ruler Cuauhtémoc in relation to understandings of racial difference.

Critical reception of opera and zarzuela further constructs opera as an intersection of societal ideals. Reviewers in Mexico City newspapers expressed their own opinions of performances, as well as the reputations of the performers and the reaction of the audience, exemplified by critical responses to Angela Peralta's portrayal of *Lucía* in Gaetano Donizetti's opera *Lucía di Lammermoor*.<sup>6</sup> "Mrs. Peralta, as always, enthused the audience, and the excitement reached its climax when Angela sang the aria of delirium. Our Nightingale becomes more deserving of her fame she has achieved every day, and the Mexican public considers her their most-loved artist...An immense number of wreaths were thrown on the stage, and this artist received as tribute the most enthusiastic bravos and most deserved applause." Mexico City critics also remarked on the behavior or decorum of the audience, the proper fashion of the male and female spectators, as well as the stylish attire of foreign stars, such as Adelina Patti.<sup>7</sup> The opera scene therefore presents an intersection of Mexican ideologies and values, as well as a meeting with those of Europe.

The power structure within the opera scene, and Italian opera in particular, makes

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<sup>6</sup> "La Sra. Peralta, como de costumbre, entusiasmó á la concurrencia, y este entusiasmo llegó á su solmo cuando Angela canto la aria del delirio. Nuestro Ruiseñor ses hace cada día mas digno de la fama que ha conquistado, y el público mexicano encuentra en ella á su artista mas querida...Un inmenso número de ramilletes fué arrojado á la escena, y los mas entusiastas bravos y los aplausos mas justos fueron el homenaje tributado á la artista." *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 7 August 1872.

<sup>7</sup> See for example, *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 7 September 1871; Farine y Banders, "Los trajes de Patti," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 26 December 1884.

clear the importance of European composers, works, and musicians in sustaining opera in Mexico, and in furthering the prevalent understanding of social structures in late nineteenth-century Mexico. The lack of Mexican opera companies meant that impresarios and singers from Italy, France, and Spain determined what works appeared on Mexico City stages. As Leonora Saavedra explains, the unstable political and economic conditions, as well as the lack of a significant urban middle class made it nearly impossible for the Mexican state or individual investors to sustain a Mexican opera company.<sup>8</sup> Among the performing troupes in Mexico, the opera companies from Italy were seen as the most refined and “civilized.” Mexican composers including Melesio Morales rarely obtained premieres for their Italian-style operas because Italian opera companies were reluctant to perform anything by a composer not already established in Italy. This preference for Italian opera composers then reinforced the perceived superiority of European culture in Mexico.

Participants in the opera scene also had to negotiate the impact of gender hierarchies prevalent in both Mexico and Europe. As in Europe, women in Mexico were expected to remain at home, fulfilling their destiny as housewives.<sup>9</sup> Despite increased educational opportunities for women in Mexico during the late nineteenth century, politicians and intellectuals viewed this schooling as a means of making women better mothers, daughters, and moral guides for society.<sup>10</sup> As I will show in chapter three, singer Carolina Civili was an example of a female performer who could embody the “ideal” woman while also furthering

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<sup>8</sup> Leonora Saavedra, “Staging the Nation: Race, Religion, and History in Mexican Opera of the 1940s,” *The Opera Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (2008): 3.

<sup>9</sup> Julia Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico: A Past Unveiled*, trans. Alan Hynds (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 74.

<sup>10</sup> Vallens, *Working Women*, 21–22.

her public career by conforming to models of beauty and femininity.

Men in the opera scene, particularly singers such as Enrico Tamberlick, existed between multiple sets of gender norms governing vocal sound, physical appearance, and notions of “masculine” behavior. Whereas earlier *bel canto* opera encouraged a sweet, pure and flexible voice, the “chest C” and Verdian tenor tone emphasized strength and depth of tone color.<sup>11</sup> Singers like Enrico Tamberlick, whom critics considered a master of the lighter *bel canto* style, risked being considered less masculine or heroic because of their softer and sweeter sound, as opposed to the fuller and richer sound of the Verdian tenor. The same was true of male operatic roles that challenged conceptions of the operatic hero or masculine man by, for example, wallowing in their suffering rather than taking action to change the situation.<sup>12</sup> Though Mexican critic Alfredo Bablot praised these aspects of both Tamberlick’s voice and his depiction of Cuauhtémoc, opera critics and audience members did not always accept those who lacked a “heroic” sound or character.

The audience reinforced the importance of prevalent beliefs concerning race, gender, and nation in the opera scene because its tastes helped to determine which works and which singers succeeded on the stages of Mexico City. Mexican audiences saw opera and zarzuela performances, but especially Italian opera, as a means of demonstrating their own refined “European” tastes and values, as well as their elite status in Mexican society. As noted by both critics and composers (including Melesio Morales), in order for one’s opera to be

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<sup>11</sup> John Potter, *Tenor: History of a Voice* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 46.

<sup>12</sup> William E. Grim, “The Male Heroine in Opera,” *The Opera Journal* 30, no. 3 (1997): 2; Pablo Piccato, “Politics and the Technology of Honor: Dueling in Turn-of-the-Century Mexico,” *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 2 (1999): 331, 334, 345.

accepted by Mexican audiences as “legitimate” the author needed to be Italian.<sup>13</sup> Ignacio Altamirano and other critics lamented this lack of recognition for Mexican composers, as well as perceived hypocrisy in their so-called sophisticated tastes that favored the “vulgar” and “lascivious” can-can. Writings by critics, composers, and performers then clarify the relationship between the opera scene and social and cultural structures in Mexico.

### **Case Studies in Context**

The many imported opera and zarzuela genres from Europe serve as a testament to the extent of European influence in late nineteenth-century Mexico. Though the French occupation ended in 1867, Mexico City impresarios continued the Emperor’s efforts to bring Italian opera companies to Mexico. In addition, Spanish zarzuela troupes regularly performed at Mexico City opera houses to full audiences. For a period of four years, these Spanish troupes were also representatives of French opera because they performed arrangements of French opéra bouffe, then very popular throughout Europe. Perhaps because of the strained relationship between Mexico and France following the 1867 execution of the French Emperor of Mexico, French troupes did not travel to Mexico until 1873.

During this time Mexican musicians also contributed in various ways to operas and zarzuelas in Mexico City. They played in the orchestras accompanying the singers, and some Mexican women, such as Ana Cejudo (active, 1860s–1870s) and Rosa Palacios (active, 1870s–1880s) starred in zarzuela productions. Mexican singers rarely participated in Italian opera productions because Italian opera impresarios were notoriously close-minded about

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<sup>13</sup> *La Orquesta*, 31 January 1866; Melesio Morales, “*Ildegonda*,” *El Pajaro Verde*, 27 January 1866; quoted in Melesio Morales, *Melesio Morales (1838–1908): Labor Periodística*, selection, introduction, notes, and newspaper bibliography by Aurea Maya (Mexico City: CENIDIM, 1994), 2.



incorporating anyone or anything Mexican into their performances. Thus, European impresarios and singers controlled who, when, and what appeared on Mexico City stages. For this reason the success enjoyed by Mexican singer Angela Peralta and Mexican composers Melesio Morales and Aniceto Ortega was exceptional because of existing inequalities in the opera scene and the increased valuation of European tastes and cultures as part of government efforts to “civilize” Mexico, such as encouraging European immigration.

This dissertation analyzes in detail composers, performers, and individual musical works that played a significant role in the post-French-occupation Mexico City opera and zarzuela scene. Mexican composers Melesio Morales and Aniceto Ortega both wrote Italian-style operas, *Ildegonda* and *Guatimotzín*, in the 1860s and 1870s, which had successful premieres in Mexico City. Morales’s *Ildegonda* was also performed in Italy, which led Mexican critics and audiences to depict him as an example of Mexico’s “European” future. In Mexico City, the reception of Aniceto Ortega’s *Guatimotzín* focused on the opera’s incorporation of Mexican history and vernacular music, as well as portrayals of racial difference by Italian tenor Enrico Tamberlick and Mexican singer Angela Peralta. Mexican soprano Angela Peralta forged a career in Italian opera both in Mexico and Europe, served as impresario of an Italian opera company in Mexico, and composed salon pieces. The wide range of her successes challenged established gender boundaries, and began to dismantle the walls of xenophobia erected by Italian opera companies in Mexico. Alongside Peralta, Italian singer Enrico Tamberlick, through both his voice and his choice of opera roles, stretched the ideal formulation of masculinity in nineteenth-century Mexico. In zarzuelas Spanish singer and can-can dancer Amalia Gómez’s performances posed further questions concerning limitations placed on women in Mexican society.

Melesio Morales (1838–1908), one of the most famous nineteenth-century Mexican composers, composed five operas between 1863 and 1901. His first opera *Romeo y Julieta* premiered in 1863. Morales completed his second opera, *Ildegonda*, in 1864 and only obtained a premiere in 1866 after the French Emperor and Empress of Mexico agreed to guarantee the costs of production.<sup>14</sup> Later in 1866, Morales left for Europe to polish his compositional skills and eventually secured a premiere for *Ildegonda* in the spring of 1869 in Florence, Italy.<sup>15</sup> When the triumphant Morales returned to Mexico, he was treated as a “conquering hero.”<sup>16</sup> He also organized the composition department at the recently–founded National Conservatory, where he taught Gustavo E. Campa, Ricardo Castro, and Julián Carillo. He later wrote three more operas, *Gino Corsini* (premiered in Mexico City, 15 July 1877), *Cleopatra* (premiered in Mexico City, 14 November 1891), and *Anita*, based on the siege of Puebla in 1867 (never premiered, finished in 1901). All the librettos were in Italian, and their musical styles remained consistent with Italian operas of the period (including

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<sup>14</sup> For more on the long road to the premiere of *Ildegonda*, see the 31 January and 4 February 1866 issues of the Mexican newspaper *La Orquesta*; 11 November and 15 November 1865 issues of *La Cronista*.

<sup>15</sup> In his article “Morales, Melesio,” in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* (<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/19079> (accessed 23 October 2010)), Robert Stevenson states that the premiere occurred in late 1868. Based on documentary evidence, including Morales’s own writings, I agree with Karl Bellinghausen and Aurea Maya that the premiere took place in January of 1869. For more information on the premiere, please see Aurea Maya, editor, *Melesio Morales (1838–1908): Labor Periodística* (Mexico City: CENIDIM, 1994), XII, 2–3; Melesio Morales, *Mi libro verde de apuntes e impresiones*, introduction by Karl Bellinghausen (Mexico City: CONACULTA, 1999), XXII–XXXI, 23–25.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Stevenson, “Morales, Melesio,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/19079> (accessed 23 October 2010).

*verismo* influences in *Anita*).<sup>17</sup>

Aniceto Ortega del Villar (1825–1875) was an established composer, pianist, and doctor in Mexico. While he served as professor of medicine at the National Medical School in Mexico City, he also composed numerous orchestral marches, waltzes, piano works, and the opera in nine scenes, *Guatimotzín* (libretto partly co-written by Mexican writer José Tomás de Cuellar). Ortega's *marchas* (marches) often had patriotic themes or dedications, exemplified by the *Marcha Zaragoza* (dedicated to the General who defeated the French at Puebla in 1862) and the *Marcha Republicana* (a battle cry for a free Mexico during the French occupation) and enjoyed popularity in Mexico.<sup>18</sup> Ortega wrote his only opera or “musical episode,” *Guatimotzín*, in 1871, at the request of Italian singer Enrico Tamberlick. *Guatimotzín* is considered the first Mexican opera to incorporate the country's indigenous history and music.

Two of the stars of *Guatimotzín*, Mexican soprano Angela Peralta (1845–1883) and Italian tenor Enrico Tamberlick (1820–1889) became icons of Italian opera in Mexico. Peralta began her singing career in Mexico at the age of sixteen, and soon left for Italy in 1862, and subsequently traveled throughout Europe for three years where she received rave reviews in operas such as Bellini's *La Sonnambula*.<sup>19</sup> She returned to Mexico in 1866 as the court singer for the French Emperor and his wife, but left for another tour of Europe in 1867, during which she married her cousin, Eugenio de Castera, and sang in productions including

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<sup>17</sup> Stevenson, “Morales, Melesio,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Günther, *Die Musikkulturen Lateinamerikas im 19. Jahrhundert*, Volume 57 of *Studien zur Musikgeschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Regensburg: Gustav Bosse, 1982), 302.

<sup>19</sup> Robert M. Stevenson, *Music in Mexico: A Historical Survey* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1952), 201–202.

*Lucia di Lammermoor* (La Scala, Milan), *Lucrezia Borgia*, and *Norma*.<sup>20</sup> She premiered *Guatimotzín* in Mexico City in 1871, and in the following year brought her own Italian opera company to Mexico.<sup>21</sup>

Between 1872 and 1874 Peralta took her third and final trip to Europe, and in 1875 her lover, Mexican writer Julián Montiel y Duarte, published her compositions, *El Album Musical de Angela Peralta*. After the death of her husband in 1876, Peralta stopped performing for a time, observing the expected period of mourning. She returned to the stage in 1877 to help organize the Mexican premiere of Verdi's *Requiem*.<sup>22</sup> Later that year she also sang in the premiere of Melesio Morales's *Gino Corsini*. She was in the midst of a Mexican tour when she became ill with yellow fever in Mazatlán. In 1883, at the age of 38, she died, but not before marrying her longtime love Julián Montiel y Duarte.<sup>23</sup>

By the time Enrico Tamberlick first met Angela Peralta during her second tour of Europe in the late 1860s, he already had an established career in Europe. He was particularly known for his portrayals of Otello in Rossini's *Otello* and Ernani in Verdi's *Ernani*, and for creating the role of Don Alvaro in Verdi's *La Forza del Destino* in St. Petersburg (1862). Tamberlick performed in Italian operas throughout the world, from Russia to the Americas. While in Mexico with Peralta in 1871 Tamberlick requested that Ortega compose a "Mexican" opera. This resulted in Ortega's only opera *Guatimotzín*, which featured

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<sup>20</sup> Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, 202.

<sup>21</sup> A. de Maria y Campos, *Angela Peralta: El Ruiseñor Mexicano* (Mexico City: Ediciones Xochitl, 1944), 128–129.

<sup>22</sup> Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, 202.

<sup>23</sup> For more on her final tour, and especially her last days in Mazatlán, see Sergio López Sánchez, *El Teatro Angela Peralta de Mazatlán: del desahucio a la resurrección*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Mexico City: CONACULTA, INBA & CITRU, 2004), 73–93.

Tamberlick in the starring role of Cuauhtémoc. Through his interpretation of the role of Cuauhtémoc, Tamberlick contributed to ongoing debates in Mexican society about what constituted the “indigenous,” “mestizo,” and “masculine.” Tamberlick remained in Mexico and starred in Peralta’s Italian opera company, performing throughout Mexico. After leaving Mexico late in 1872, he continued to perform throughout the Americas into the 1880s.<sup>24</sup>

Unlike both Angela Peralta and Enrico Tamberlick, little is known about the life of zarzuela singer and dancer Amalia Gómez. She originally traveled to the Americas in 1868 as part of the Spanish zarzuela troupe of impresario Joaquín Gaztambide, and performed in Cuba in 1868, and then debuted in Mexico City in May of 1869. Gómez was a noted contralto in these productions, and primarily sang supporting roles. This changed in July of 1869, when Gómez portrayed Juno in the premiere of a zarzuela version of Offenbach’s *Orfée aux enfers*. Her can-can performance caused a frenzy among Mexico City audiences and critics. She was immediately catapulted to stardom, and remained in demand by Mexican audiences until the French opera companies arrived in Mexico in late 1873, after which she faded into the background of zarzuela reception.<sup>25</sup> In 1890 she committed suicide in Mexico City by throwing herself out of a corridor onto a fountain below.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth Forbes, “Tamberlik, Enrico,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/27432> (accessed 24 October 2010).

<sup>25</sup> Luis Reyes de la Maza, *Circo, Maroma y Teatro, 1810–1910* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1985), 163–174.

<sup>26</sup> Enrique Olavarria y Ferrari, *Reseña Histórica del Teatro en México, 1538–1911*, vol. 2 (Mexico City: Edición Porrúa, 1961), 1297.

## *Sources*

A wide range of sources, including Mexico City newspapers, published writings, and musical scores inform my assessment of these case studies. Late nineteenth-century Mexico City was home to daily newspapers, such as *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* and literary periodicals, including *El Renacimiento*, in a variety of languages including Spanish, English (*The Two Republics*), and French (*Le Trait D'union*). They not only chronicle opera and zarzuela performances in Mexico City, but also offer critical responses in reviews that reflect audience expectations and the position of opera in Mexican society. Mexican critics and publishers also reprinted articles from European newspapers, especially reviews of musical performances in artistic centers such as Paris and Milan, which indicate consciousness in Mexico of European reception of both general styles and specific performers.

Mexico City newspapers also reflected intellectual movements and perceptions of Mexico's place in the world. Articles by Ignacio Altamirano and Francisco Cosmes illustrate views on the status of indigenous populations in Mexico, and how they would respond to "European" education. Newspapers geared towards women, such as Concepción Gimeno de Flaquer's *El Album de la Mujer*, describe the position of women in late nineteenth-century Mexico City. Reprinted columns from European newspapers on women's roles in society and Parisian fashion demonstrate direct influence on the readership, especially in the upper classes. Newspapers in Mexico City then provide a wealth of information and perspectives on the opera scenes at home and abroad, and illustrate a wider social and cultural context for Mexico City and its people.

Other published writings by composers, intellectuals, and politicians further clarify the components of the opera scene and potential influences on participants. Published

writings by composer Melesio Morales, from his personal “Green Book” to his contributions to Mexican newspapers illustrate how he perceived opera in Mexico.<sup>27</sup> Works by historians, and women’s advocates offer a more nuanced understanding of the intellectual environment of nineteenth-century Mexico and how it impacted the opera scene. Historians Antonio García Cubas and Francisco Pimentel described the unfortunate condition of the indigenous in Mexico, and advocated education as a remedy, which provides a contrast to indigenous characters in Aniceto Ortega’s *Guatimotzín*.<sup>28</sup> Lawyer Genaro García’s legal treatise “Points About the Condition of Women” illustrates the continued secondary status of women in Mexican society, and therefore aids in the understanding of critical reactions to female roles and performers.<sup>29</sup>

Musical scores constitute an integral part of my dissertation because musical analysis illuminates each composer’s unique musical perspective and how it fits into the prevalent ideologies of late nineteenth-century Mexico. The published piano-vocal scores of *Ildegonda* illustrate how certain excerpts were performed at the European premiere in Milan in 1869 (there is no published or complete manuscript version of *Ildegonda* as performed in Mexico

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<sup>27</sup> Morales, *Mi Libro Verde* (1999); Maya, *El Labor Periodística* (1994).

<sup>28</sup> Antonio García Cubas, *The Republic of Mexico in 1876: A Political and Ethnographical Division of the Population, Character, Habits, Costumes and Vocations of its Inhabitants*, trans. George F. Henderson (Mexico City: La Enseñanza, 1876); Francisco Pimentel, *Memoria sobre las causas que han originado la situación actual de la raza indígena de México y medios de remediarla*, vol. 3 (Mexico City: Tipográfica Económica, 1903; originally published in 1864).

<sup>29</sup> Genaro García, *Apuntes sobre la condición de la mujer* (Mexico City: Compañía limit. de tipógrafos, 1891).

City in 1866).<sup>30</sup> The unpublished manuscript copy of *Guatimotzín* from the Conservatorio Nacional makes it possible to examine both the music and text, though it lacks stage instructions and other extramusical notations that could clarify both the plot and changes in scenery.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the opera scores allow a comparison of the styles of *Ildegonda* and *Guatimotzín*, but lack important information that could lead to more in-depth comparisons of additional elements, such as character construction or action on the stage.

The scores of Angela Peralta's *Album Musical* provide a window into how Peralta balanced gender expectations with musical accomplishment. Multiple published exemplars exist, each with all the compositions, but in varying orders. The nineteen works also include engraved covers, and in one exemplar are accompanied by a portrait of Peralta and a personal dedication from the composer.<sup>32</sup> The scores, images, and other materials published with them construct a clearer profile of Peralta as a singer, composer, and woman in nineteenth-century Mexico.

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<sup>30</sup> The published selections consist of piano-vocal scores of: 1) *Ildegonda's* aria with Idelbene "Quai memorie" (Act I, number 6) as sung by Isabella Alba in Mexico City; 2) Rizzardo's aria with *Ildegonda* "Errante pellegrina" (Act I, number 7) as sung by Paolo Augusti in Florence; 3) *Ildegonda* and Rizzardo's duet "Solo un'alba" (Act I, number 8); 4) Idelbene's aria "Bella fra quante copre" (Act II, number 2) as sung by R. Pala in Florence; 5) *Ildegonda's* aria with the nuns "Perdon Gran Dio" (Act II, number 3); and 6) *Ildegonda* and Rizzardo's duet "Te dannato" (Act II, number 4) as sung by Isabella Alba and Giuseppe Tombassi in Mexico City. All published by Ricordi in Milan, 1869.

<sup>31</sup> Aniceto Ortega del Villar, "Cuautemotzín," score, ca. 1871, Special Collections, Conservatorio Nacional de Música de México.

<sup>32</sup> Angela Peralta de Castera, *Album Musical de Angela Peralta* (Mexico City: Julián Montiel y Duarte, 1875). Published letter of dedication to Julián Montiel y Duarte; handwritten letter by unknown student giving the *Album* as a gift to Mexican singer María Bonilla.



*The Arts in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico City*

Late nineteenth-century Mexico encompassed a myriad of changes in political power and foreign influences amidst a blossoming opera and zarzuela scene. When the French occupation ended in 1867, Benito Juárez (1867–72) and his successor Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada (1872–76) sought to create a Mexican citizenry by providing increased educational opportunities.<sup>33</sup> Along with intellectuals such as Antonio García Cubas, they believed that through education the Mexican population, and especially indigenous peoples, could attain liberty, order, and progress.<sup>34</sup> The focus on “Europeanizing” Mexico then expanded under Porfirio Díaz (1876–1880, 1884–1910) and Miguel Gonzalez (1880–1884), who sought to “civilize” and “whiten” Mexican society by encouraging European immigration as well as importing and replicating European ideals and culture, such as taste in the arts.

Opera and zarzuela coexisted with many other thriving musical and visual art forms in late nineteenth-century Mexico City. For example, the Sociedad Filarmónica organized weekly public concerts that included orchestral works such as Beethoven symphonies, as well as operatic excerpts and piano transcriptions of operatic works.<sup>35</sup> The 1860s brought recognition of Beethoven as a musical master, and Beethoven festival concerts in the 1870s included piano sonatas (opus no. not given), the Violin Concerto, and the overture *Leonora*,

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<sup>33</sup> Anna Macias, “Mexican Women in the Social Revolution” (Paper delivered at the American Historical Association’s Annual Meeting in New York, 1971), 10, 14; quoted in Vallens, *Working Women*, 13.

<sup>34</sup> Vallens, *Working Women*, 14.

<sup>35</sup> Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, 191-192; Carlos A. Forment, *Democracy in Latin America, 1760-1900: Civic Selfhood and Public Life in Mexico and Peru* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 264–265.

no. 3.<sup>36</sup> Elite families also hosted musical salons in their homes during which young women would perform solo pieces for piano or works for piano and voice by both European and Mexican composers.<sup>37</sup> These recitals served not only to attract potential suitors, but also to reinforce the elevated position of the host family and that of the performer.

Unlike the salon and opera, the theater attracted spectators from a wide range of socioeconomic levels. They flocked to see staged dramas, short musical plays (*tandas*), puppet shows, and variety shows. Both Mexican and Spanish companies presented dramatic works, which increasingly included plays by Mexican writers such as Manuel Acuña and José Peón Contreras.<sup>38</sup> These dramas thrived on the patronage of the middle and upper-classes at established theaters, while the *tandas*, puppet shows, and variety show occurred in less-elite settings. For example, *tandas* at the Teatro Principal became an annual event during the November fiesta season that continued from 1869 until the theater burned down in 1931.<sup>39</sup> In addition, *jacalones*, temporary theaters constructed on and near the city center, featured *tandas*, comedies, and puppet shows for inexpensive admission prices. The *jacalones* contributed to the visual landscape of Mexico City, which became a primary focus in uniting the arts with “modernity.”

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<sup>36</sup> Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, 208–209.

<sup>37</sup> The years 1870-1900 marked the rise of salon compositions by Mexican composers. The catalogue of Mexican published A. Wagner y Levien Sucs contained works by 103 nineteenth-century Mexican salon composers. The most famous Mexican salon composer was Juventino Rosas, whose waltz “Sobre las Olas” received international acclaim. (Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, 205–208)

<sup>38</sup> Felicia Hardison Londré and Daniel J. Watermeier, *The History of North American Theater: The United States, Canada and Mexico from Pre-Columbian Times to the Present* (2000; reprint, London: Continuum Press, 1998), 234.

<sup>39</sup> Londré and Watermeier, *The History of North American Theater*, 231.

Like theater, the visual arts in late nineteenth-century Mexico City expanded, as seen in sculpture. During the French occupation, Emperor Maximilian ordered the construction of what is now the Paseo de la Reforma, a wide boulevard that connected the zócalo (city center) with his residence, the Castillo de Chapultepec.<sup>40</sup> Porfirio Díaz later added to the Paseo de la Reforma statues of Christopher Columbus and Aztec Emperors (including Cuauhtémoc), as well as an “Angel of Independence” column inspired by the Bastille in Paris.<sup>41</sup> The 1870s through the 1900s were characterized by a rise in the building of monuments throughout Mexico City as part of efforts to “modernize” the City based on the urban planning of Paris.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps it is a testament then to the close relationship between opera and the construction of a “modern” Mexico City that in 1872 a bust of Mexican singer Angela Peralta was erected at the Teatro Nacional.<sup>43</sup>

Opera and zarzuela performance and composition have a long history in Mexico, and began with the introduction of zarzuelas to Mexico in the late seventeenth century. Mexican opera dates back to the 1711 performance of Manuel Zumaya’s *La Parténope* in Mexico

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<sup>40</sup> Elizabeth Baquedano, et al. "Mexico City," *Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online*, <http://www.oxfordartonline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T057585> (accessed 29 March 2011).

<sup>41</sup> Guillermo de la Peña, “A New Mexican Nationalism? Indigenous Rights, Constitutional Reform, and the Conflicting Meanings of Multiculturalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 12, no. 2 (2006): 293.

<sup>42</sup> Emily Waklid, “Naturalizing Modernity: Urban Parks, Public Gardens and Drainage Projects in Porfirian Mexico City,” *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 23, no. 1 (2007): 102.

<sup>43</sup> Ramón Pulido Granata, *Tradición Operística en la Ciudad de México (siglo XIX)* (Mexico City: Secretaria de Educación Publica, Subsecretaría de Asuntos Culturales, 1970), 189.

City.<sup>44</sup> In the eighteenth century opera performance was restricted to private productions held at the homes of colonial officials and other elites, or at the newly-erected Coliseo Nuevo. For example, the premiere of *La Parténope* occurred at the viceregal palace.<sup>45</sup> Public performances of opera did not occur until the early nineteenth century, and the majority of these works by Cimarosa, Rossini, and Paisiello were performed in Spanish. The early nineteenth century also brought public performances of zarzuelas and zarzuela arrangements of operas by Cimarosa, Paisiello and others at the Coliseo Nuevo.<sup>46</sup>

In 1827 Manuel García brought his opera company to Mexico, where they performed operas by Rossini, Mozart, and others in Italian, which drew criticism from audiences.<sup>47</sup> In the 1830s the Mexican government patronized the Italian opera company of Filippo Galli, which reinforced that Italian opera should be sung in Italian and increased the demand for operas by Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini.<sup>48</sup> Soon after, zarzuelas joined the now established opera scene around 1850.<sup>49</sup> In the 1850s Mexican composers again attempted to enter the thriving opera stage. Luis Baca (1826–55) wrote two operas, *Leonor* and *Giovanna de Castiglia*, neither of which received a premiere. Cenobio Paniagua (1821–82) had more

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<sup>44</sup> Robert Stevenson, “Opera Beginnings in the New World,” *The Musical Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (1959): 8.

<sup>45</sup> Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, 173. The Coliseo Nuevo was completed in 1753, and later became known as the Teatro Principal.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

<sup>47</sup> James Radomski, “Manuel García in Mexico (1827–1828): Part 1,” *Inter-American Music Review* XII, no. 1 (1991): 122–23.

<sup>48</sup> Nancy Vogely, “Italian opera in early national Mexico,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (1996): 279–89.

<sup>49</sup> Janet Sturman, *Zarzuela: Spanish Operetta, American Stage* (University of Illinois Press, 2000), 32–35.

success, as his opera *Catalina de Guisa* premiered in Mexico in 1859. The premiere occurred fourteen years after its composition because, as Paniagua discovered, Italian troupes would only sing his opera if the libretto was in Italian. In addition, he was forced to make numerous concessions for the whims of the Italian performers.<sup>50</sup> *Catalina de Guisa*, despite its initial success, was only rarely produced after the premiere.

The late nineteenth century brought a new diversity in musical performance that now included companies from Italy, Spain, and France. Mexico remained unable to support its own opera troupe, so it relied on traveling performers from abroad. After the French occupation ended, the opera scene expanded—troupes now traveled from Spain, Italy, France (beginning in 1873), England, Cuba, and the United States to perform in Mexico. These expansions would represent Mexico's growing role as a stop along the performance route through the Americas. Increased activity was partially the result of improved transportation, such as train routes between Mexico and the United States, and Mexico's improved artistic reputation based on the European successes of Mexican composers, such as Melesio Morales, and performers including famed soprano Angela Peralta.<sup>51</sup>

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

The performance and composition of opera and zarzuela in Mexico City contributed in distinctive ways to constructions of potential Mexican national identities. As cultural phenomena opera and zarzuela illustrated the lack of a unified people, mindset, or collective identity during the late nineteenth century in Mexico. First, opera and zarzuela appealed

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<sup>50</sup> Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, 195–97.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 197, 202.

mainly to urban mestizo and white elite audiences, and not the illiterate urban working class and rural indigenous populations.<sup>52</sup> These diverse groups did not share life experiences, ways of self-identification, or even a definition of Mexicanness.<sup>53</sup> In addition Mexico continued to suffer from uneven economic development well into the twentieth century, further isolating Mexico City from the rest of the country. For instance the railroad boom did not occur until the 1880s, and even then was only affordable for a select few with sufficient monetary and material resources. Unique social, cultural, and racial conditions in Mexico, therefore, make cross-cultural comparisons with opera scenes in Europe difficult even though players in the Mexico City scene were in dialogue with what they perceived as European ideals of “civilized” culture.

The participants and components of the opera and zarzuela scene studied here helped to define theoretical and social constructs unique to Mexico City. I examine musical style and interpretation, as well as how and why they clarify the meanings of concepts such as *mestizaje* (racial intermixture), social and gender ideals, as well as identity formation. I therefore draw from Italian-style operas by Mexican composers, Melesio Morales’s *Ildegonda*, and Aniceto Ortega’s *Guatimotzín* and Spanish zarzuelas such as *Los Dioses del Olimpo*. I also study relationships between a variety of performers, zarzuela singer-dancer Amalia Gómez, Mexican soprano Angela Peralta, and Italian tenor Enrico Tamberlick, and efforts to build a “civilized” Mexico by exhibiting “civilized” cultural, gender, and racial

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<sup>52</sup> Lee Stacy, *Mexico and the United States* (New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2002), 466.

<sup>53</sup> I do not use Benedict Anderson to examine the idea of national identity here because, as scholars such as John Charles Chasteen and Sara Castro-Klarén have demonstrated, Anderson’s construction of nationalism and national identities in Latin America is problematic due to his reliance on print culture. See John Charles Chasteen and Sara Castro-Klarén, eds., *Beyond Imagined Communities: Reading and Writing the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

ideals. In order to perceive the depth of opera and zarzuela's role in both reinforcing and challenging these ideals, a combination of theoretical and analytical methods clarifies the many distinguishing facets of Mexican political, intellectual, and artistic culture during the late nineteenth century.

Classifications of racial mixture help me emphasize conceptual differences between the performances of *mestizaje* and *mestizo* within *Guatimotzín*, as well as life experiences of individual performers, especially Angela Peralta. My analytical approach for *mestizaje* is informed by the theories of both Carol A. Smith and Peter Wade. Smith describes *mestizaje* as three different, but related processes: the first addresses the social processes, the creation, education, and positioning of the *mestizo* within society; the second outlines the process of choosing to self-identify as *mestizo* or as part of the *mestizo* national subject, a symbol of mixed cultures (primarily Mexican and European); the third process involves the continually shifting definition of *mestizo* and *mestizaje* in the political and anthropological discourses of racial, cultural, and political differences. Wade focuses another aspect of *mestizaje*, the lived process of *mestizaje* that operates in an individual's experiences and within social networks.<sup>54</sup> People live the process of racial and cultural mixture by, for example, performing in a European genre as a *mestiza*. Expanding on Klor de Alva's theorizing of *mestizaje*, Wade also explores the 'chameleonic nature of *mestizaje*,' which either places *mestizo* America within the West, denying indigenusness, or within indigenusness, denying the West.<sup>55</sup> This understanding of *mestizaje* problematizes the position of *Guatimotzín* and its

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<sup>54</sup> Peter Wade, "Rethinking *Mestizaje*: Ideology and Lived Experience," *Journal of Latin American Studies* no. 37 (2005): 239.

<sup>55</sup> Wade, "Rethinking *Mestizaje*," 242; Klor de Alva, "The Postcolonialization of the (Latin) American Experience: A Reconsideration of "Colonialism," "Postcolonialism," and

performance of mestizo America within a European mode of expression.

In order to analyze identity formations in the music and individual performers in *Guatimotzín* and *Ildegonda*, I draw from scholars such as Judith Butler and Cristina Beltrán, who focus on the mutable nature of identity, and its formation through performance.<sup>56</sup> Butler's ideas concerning the contingency of performative gender can also be applied to race. For example, she states that the gendered body "acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives."<sup>57</sup> Performance therefore shapes, reinforces, and transforms the social rules, such as principles of racial, gender, and class difference, as seen in case studies of performers such as Angela Peralta and the operas *Guatimotzín* and *Ildegonda*.

Within performed identity the idea of mimicry as described by Homi Bhabha also helps to position the portrayal of the characters in *Guatimotzín* within the continuing colonial influences of mestizaje. Mimicry focuses on citing, copying, and embodying the Other, and thereby copying colonial ideals.<sup>58</sup> Colonial mimicry strives to make the Other "a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite."<sup>59</sup> Thus, in order for a mimetic performance to succeed in reasserting colonial authority, it must produce its slippage or excess to

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"Mestizaje", "The Postcolonialization of the (Latin) American Experience: A Reconsideration of "Colonialism," "Postcolonialism," and "Mestizaje", in *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*, ed. Gyan Prakash (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 251–253.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Peggy Phelan (1993), Peggy Phelan (1997), as well as Judith Butler (1993) and Judith Butler (1997).

<sup>57</sup> Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 526.

<sup>58</sup> Mary-Lee Mulholland, "Mariachi in Excess," PhD diss., York University (2007), 7.

<sup>59</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge Publishers, 2008), 122.



maintain, nevertheless, a sense of difference.<sup>60</sup> While Cuauhtémoc was represented as manifesting European ideals of dignity and honor (almost the same as the Europeans), his (Tamberlick's) skin was darkened to reinforce his otherness.

My understanding of the performance of race also draws from works by Deborah Wong and Anita Gonzalez-El Hilali. In her article "The Asian American Body in Performance," Wong focuses on the metaphors of seeing and hearing race in the performing body.<sup>61</sup> These ideas are especially important when considering critics' responses to the performances of Cuauhtémoc and his wife, the Princesa, singing within an Italian-style opera. Anita Gonzalez-El Hilali theorizes the performance of race in a Mexican context, with a particular focus on the relationship between professional performer and audience. She argues that performers present a vision of a racial or ethnic identity for a public "that may associate a particular type of artistic production with a particular racial or ethnic or social or geographic subculture."<sup>62</sup> This conception of the performer and audience relates closely to opera and zarzuela in nineteenth-century Mexico because opera audiences especially attended foreign productions in part to reinforce their own modernity.<sup>63</sup>

Mary-Lee Mulholland also explores the performative in a Mexican context, examining how mariachi performers reify and normalize subjectivities of race, gender and

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<sup>60</sup> Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 122–123.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>62</sup> Anita Gonzalez-El Hilali, "Performing Mestizaje: Official Culture and Identity in Veracruz, Mexico," PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1997, 7.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

class.<sup>64</sup> Mulholland's theorization of mariachi as a space where the genre and its participants, including musicians, experts, fans and anti-fans are "caught up in the everyday spaces of making Mexico" informs the discussions of opera and zarzuela composers', performers', and critics' participation in constructing national identities in late nineteenth-century Mexico City.<sup>65</sup> For example, individual performances within and in reaction to *Guatimotzín* and *Ildegonda* necessarily incorporate cultural difference and histories of contending peoples, such as the Mexican indigenous and lingering influences of European imperial powers, as well as tense spaces of racial discourse, such as that of mestizaje.<sup>66</sup>

The analyses of the librettos and music of *Guatimotzín* and *Ildegonda* interpret compositional processes as performative acts, which Alejandro Madrid theorizes in his dissertation by drawing from Bakhtin's theories of performance. Madrid describes how a musical text exemplifies the utterance of an individual negotiating the tensions with the ideologies that surround them.<sup>67</sup> Musical style becomes a map of performative composition that emphasizes individual agency in producing cultural meaning and identity in changing a socio-cultural context.<sup>68</sup> This set of ideas is useful in considering *Guatimotzín* as a performance of competing ideas of mestizaje in nineteenth-century Mexico, as it allows for

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<sup>64</sup> Mulholland, "Mariachi in Excess," 13.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>66</sup> Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation," *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi Bhabha (London: Routledge Publishers, 1990), 299; quoted in Mulholland, "Mariachi in Excess," 24.

<sup>67</sup> Alejandro Luis Madrid-Gonzalez, "Writing modernist and avant-garde music in Mexico: performativity, transculturation, and identity after the revolution, 1920–1930," PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2003, 17–18.

<sup>68</sup> Madrid-González, "Writing modernist and avant-garde music," 18–19.

me to interpret the opera as a performance of the composer's, Aniceto Ortega's, agency in negotiating the transculturation of Mexican and European cultures through the text and musical styles of *Guatimotzín*.<sup>69</sup>

Mexican opera reflects larger ideological dialogues occurring in late nineteenth-century Mexico, such as mestizaje and nation formation. In particular, operas by Mexican composers Melesio Morales (*Ildegonda*) and Aniceto Ortega (*Guatimotzín*) embodied differing conceptions of Mexico's future as primarily European, or as Mexican-European, respectively. Music therefore became a system of representation, as Stuart Hall states, a language that produces cultural meaning. Participation in a musical performance, such as an opera, as a composer, singer or a spectator constitutes a cultural practice that gives meaning

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<sup>69</sup> By centering the analysis on mestizaje, rather than musical exoticism and cosmopolitanism, I can take into account Ortega's compositional performance as a Mexican while also examining the origins and constructions of individual characters and musical excerpts in *Guatimotzín* in the context of existing racial tensions in the opera scene and in Mexico City society. In addition, most of the non-operatic musical signifiers refer to popular culture (and even shared political history, as in the case of "El Espinado,"), and therefore their "exotic" character is nebulous at best. For more on musical exoticism, particularly in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe, see Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Cosmopolitanism might seem useful in deconstructing the cultural differences in Mexico and Mexico City, but though there existed cosmopolitan individuals within Mexico City, the majority of the population received foreign (especially European) cultural influences and models at least twice to three times removed from the original ideals. Therefore, the elements that certain elite Mexican individuals absorbed or incorporated into their daily lives in the end differed from that in its original context, such as extremely modest versions of Parisian tastes in fashion or outdated Italian tastes in opera. While many elites in Mexico City might have thought of themselves as cosmopolitan, in fact their tastes and values remained behind those of the Western European countries they emulated, and therefore they existed perhaps one step behind the cosmopolitan standard set by these European and United States elites. For more on efforts to create a cosmopolitan image of Mexico City see Mauricio Tenorio Trillo, "1910 Mexico City: Space and Nation in the City of the Centenario," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 28, no. 1 (1996): 75–104.

to the aural and visual elements.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, though neither Melesio Morales nor Aniceto Ortega explicitly subscribed to either viewpoint, their styles and approaches to opera composition reflected their shared sonic concepts and ideas of Italian opera, as well as their differing perceptions and goals for Mexican opera. This in turn created cultural meaning for each opera, as critics described Morales's *Ildegonda* as a traditional Italian opera, and Ortega's *Guatimotzín* became part of a larger movement interested in repositioning Mexican indigenous history as close to the ancient cultures of Europe. Their music then became a map that encoded ideological struggles, as well as imaginary and symbolic alliances.<sup>71</sup>

Music in Mexico City also participated in constructing and reinforcing gender differences, and their socially-constituted concepts and images. Can-can dancer Amalia Gómez's body and its movements were seen as an erotic spectacle, which involved being looked at and being displayed, an appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact. Mexican soprano Angela Peralta's voice, the main form of her bodily expression, became a symbol of her embodiment of the feminine ideal, especially modesty, sweetness, and purity. Such descriptions of Peralta's voice and Gómez's body reflect the fetishism of the "feminine" in Mexican culture, particularly in opera reception. The focus on the "feminine" also emerges in the discussions of Tamberlick's voice, though he portrayed heroic tenor roles. Both the visual and aural aspects of opera and zarzuela performance should therefore be seen as part of larger social constructions of gender and gender difference within Mexico City.

The analyses of Gómez's, Peralta's, and Tamberlick's individual engagement with

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<sup>70</sup> Stuart Hall, "Introduction," *Representation: Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Sage, 1997; illustrated reprint), 3.

<sup>71</sup> Madrid-González, "Writing modernist and avant-garde music," 119.

gender expectations rely on Susan Bordo's theorization of the body both as a medium of culture and a direct locus of social control. Bordo starts from Mary Douglas's concept of the body "inscribed" with culture, a surface on which prevalent rules and hierarchies are inscribed, and therefore reinforced through the body's own language.<sup>72</sup> Douglas states, "The body is a model which can stand for any bounded system... The body is a complex system. The functions of its different parts and their relations afford a source of symbols for other complex structures."<sup>73</sup> Just as the parts of the body exist within a system, aspects of social and cultural structures are bound by a larger context with its own restrictions. The body as a whole then can represent interactions between parts or social structures, such as physical movement and intellectual thought. Bordo then draws from Bourdieu's concept of the "made body," in which culture is converted into automatic or habitual activity, which may be beyond one's consciousness.<sup>74</sup> These notions of the body help to explain how one's bodily habits can contradict their strivings for change.<sup>75</sup> For example, while both Gómez and Peralta sought to overcome certain gender expectations, Gómez sustained an image of respectability by conforming to standards of feminine appearance while Peralta exemplified gender ideals through her voice and modesty about her talent.

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<sup>72</sup> Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (New York: Pantheon, 1982); summarized in Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 165.

<sup>73</sup> Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London: Ark/Routledge Kegan Paul, 1985; reprint of 1966 version), 115.

<sup>74</sup> Bordo, 165; quote drawn from Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 94.

<sup>75</sup> While importance of agency in Butler's concept of gender as performance may seem incompatible with the focus in the "inscribed body" on outside forces acting on the individual, both rely on spectators interpreting the bodily actions in order to construct conceptions of gender.

Prevalent cultural ideas and beliefs concerning gender, race, and modernity exerted power over Gómez's body through her performances of the can-can and interpretations expressed in the critical reception. Gómez's body served as a site of cultural inscription—her lived bodily experiences, including dancing the can-can, reflect changes in conceptions of social practices, such as proper dress, and societal categories, such as gender and race. Gómez's high kicks and can-can costume became statements questioning gender norms and expectations, as well as the cultural hierarchy favoring “refined” French taste.

Critics then positioned their debate about femininity on Gómez's body and its physical and artistic expressions. By doing so they reinforced the power that societal constructions of gender and racial expectations had over Gómez as a dancer and public figure. Reviews of Gómez's performances served as an expressive method that advocated particular ideas about appropriate bodily gestures, the fashion of beauty, and women's roles in the context of nineteenth-century Mexican society. Gómez's body and Peralta's voice constitute loci of practical cultural control, “useful” bodies through which they enact practices of femininity, beauty, and style, reinforcing, challenging, and transforming existing discourses.

The construction of Peralta's “feminine” reputation through her voice positions her within class and gender stereotypes, as well within the temporal and physical space of Mexico City. Thus, her body, represented by her voice, becomes inscribed by cultural beliefs concerning gender expectations and racial ideals. Peralta not only represented the rich and educated, but also performed in the most respected and “civilized” musical genre, which served to differentiate her from other women outside the “feminine” private sphere. Many of these “public” women, such as prostitutes and *chinas poblanas* (young women of mixed

race) were perceived as threats to Mexico City's moral fiber. Prostitutes were symbols of sinfulness that could spread to "respectable" citizens, especially women.<sup>76</sup> Many also saw *chinas poblanas* as a negative influence, and sought to limit their visibility at home and abroad. In the nineteenth century, European travel writers often wrote about the beauty of the *china poblana*, *mestizas* who wore colorful sequined skirts, a low-cut embroidered blouse, and a *rebozo* (shawl).<sup>77</sup> Members of [the](#) Mexican middle and upper classes saw the *china* as overtly sexual and of immoral personal character.<sup>78</sup> In an era when city representations were supposed to embody positive prospects of modernization, it was important to promote examples of "public" women [such as Angela Peralta](#) who exhibited virtuous characteristics.

Like Peralta, Enrico Tamberlick received rave reviews for his operatic performances, even though his voice and choices of roles challenged dominant conceptions of gender norms and roles. In particular, though Tamberlick and Ortega's depiction of Cuauhtémoc challenged Mexican perceptions of aesthetic characteristics of dominant (or "hegemonic") masculinity, this did not seem to impact the reception of the opera. "Hegemonic masculinity," according to R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, means the normative, most honored way of being a man.<sup>79</sup> And, like femininity, this "hegemonic" masculinity is culturally constructed, or a product of certain social and cultural processes.

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<sup>76</sup> William E. French, "Prostitutes and Guardian Angels: Women, Work, and the Family in Porfirian Mexico, 1876–1911," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 72, no. 4 (1992): 539; Kimberley Randall, "The Traveler's Eye: Chinas Poblanas and European-Inspired Costume in Post-Colonial Mexico," *The Latin American Fashion Reader*, ed. Regina A. Root (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2005), 58.

<sup>77</sup> Randall, "Traveler's Eye," 53.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 57–58.

<sup>79</sup> R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 833.

What sets it apart is its supposed focus on discriminating against and subordinating women and other men who cannot conform to this model.<sup>80</sup> The development of masculinity generates from the separation and denial of all that is considered feminine, such as passivity, care, emotion, and complacency.<sup>81</sup>

In this context, Demetriou's concept of "internal" hegemony, which refers to the social ascendancy of one group of men over all other men, helps to explain the favorable reception of the "suffering" Cuauhtémoc in *Guatimotzín* and the "feminine" qualities of Tamberlick's voice. The dominant ideal sometimes appropriates elements of other masculinities in order to continue domination, which Demetriou calls "dialectical pragmatism."<sup>82</sup> For example, in the libretto and reviews of *Guatimotzín*, the composer and critics consider Cuauhtémoc's suffering as evidence of "honor," rather than evidence of his "alternative" masculinity. These varying formulations of masculinities and their relationships with one another therefore help us understand the complexity of Tamberlick's reception in the Mexican press.

### **Relationship to Existing Literature**

This dissertation builds on the work of scholars of opera and other music in nineteenth-century Mexico by connecting Mexico City operatic culture to the larger social

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<sup>80</sup> María Esmeralda Ramos Olea and Larua Catalina Rodríguez Mendoza, "Análisis de la masculinidad desde la perspectiva de género," *El Género y sus Ámbitos de Expresión en lo Cultural, Económico y Ambiental*, ed. María Luisa Quintero and Carlos Fonseca (Mexico City: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2006), 34.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>82</sup> Demetrakis Z. Demetriou, "Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique," *Theory and Society* 30, no. 3 (2001): 339–344; Connell and Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity," 844.



and political contexts in the period after the French occupation. It fills the gap between nineteenth-century opera and zarzuela studies and music in non-European locales by addressing questions about relationships between musical styles and influences in opera performance and composition, as well as the unique role and perception of operatic and zarzuela genres in Mexico City. For example, I examine Mexican opera as a representation of efforts among elites to create national unity, and a reputation for Mexico as a stable nation abroad.

In opera literature, many have considered musical works and composers in their cultural and historical context, such as Mary Kathleen Hunter and James Webster in *Opera buffa in Mozart's Vienna* (1997), Victoria Johnson, Jane Fulcher and Thomas Ertman's edited volume *Opera and Society in Italy and France from Monteverdi to Bourdieu* (2007), and *Operatic Migrations: Transforming Works and Crossing Boundaries* (2006), edited by Roberta Montemorra Marvin and Downing A. Thomas. These works, however, do not consider opera's impact outside of Europe and the United States. Analyses of nineteenth-century operatic forms have a similar limited scope that mainly includes works written in Italy and France.<sup>83</sup> Likewise, works on opera and nation tend to focus on Europe, such as Jane Fulcher's *The Nation's Image*, Stephen C. Meyer's *The Search for German Opera*, Annegret Fauser and Mark Everist's edited volume *Music, Theater and Cultural Transfer: Paris 1830–1914*, and Katherine Preston's *Opera on the Road; Traveling Opera Companies*

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<sup>83</sup> See for example studies by Scott L. Balthazar, such as *Evolving Conventions in Italian Serious Opera*, PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1985; numerous works by Roger Parker and Carolyn Abbate including their edited volume, *Analyzing Opera: Verdi and Wagner* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); many articles by James Hepokoski, such as “Form and Content in Mid-Century Verdi: “Addio, del passato” (*La traviata*, Act III),” *Cambridge Opera Journal* (1989): 249–276; many by Mary Ann Smart, Emanuele Senici, Philip Gossett, and others.

*in the United States.*

The study of gender in opera follows in the tradition of the extensive body of work on women in opera, individual performers, composers, works, and critical reception. For example, my analysis of Angela Peralta and Amalia Gómez in the context of gender expectations draws from studies by scholars such as Susan Rutherford, Carolyn Abbate and Wendy Heller.<sup>84</sup> The analysis of roles in opera and their relationship to gender norms draws from Mary Ann Smart's edited volume *Siren Songs* (2000), Carolyn Abbate's "Opera, Or the Envoicing of Women" (1993), and Mary Ann Smart's *Mimomania* (2004). These works, though seminal in the field, do not incorporate many non-European singers or operatic works or scenes outside of Italy, France, and Germany. Many examinations of representations of race and gender in opera also remain focused on European works, such as Susan McClary's *Carmen* and Ralph Locke's *Musical Exoticism*.<sup>85</sup>

Other scholars have examined opera and zarzuela in Mexico and other parts of Latin America, such as Malena Kuss (1992), Sally Bissell (1987) and Susan Thomas (2002, 2009). Their methodologies in analyzing music and text, along with cultural conceptions and representations of race, gender, and nationality in specific Latin American contexts are crucial influences on my approach to opera and zarzuela in Mexico. Drawing from their studies, this dissertation analyzes how individual performers, composers, and critics help to shape our understanding of the significant role of musical entertainments in identity

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<sup>84</sup> Susan Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera, 1815–1930*, Cambridge Studies in Opera, ed. Arthur Groos (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Carolyn Abbate, "Opera; Or the Envoicing of Women," *Musicology and Difference: Gender and Sexuality in Music Scholarship*, ed. Ruth A. Solie (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993): 225–258.

<sup>85</sup> Susan McClary, *Carmen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

formations.

Literature specifically on music in Mexico, with a few exceptions, does not address the social and political ideologies or cultural expectations within and outside the opera scene. Karl Bellinghausen, Aurea Maya, Ricardo Miranda, and Robert Stevenson have all contributed significantly to existing knowledge of opera in nineteenth-century Mexico through their studies of composer Melesio Morales, his *Ildegonda*, and Mexican composer Cenobio Paniagua.<sup>86</sup> They do not, however, incorporate the diverse musical entertainments available in nineteenth-century Mexico, or analyze the work's place in the context of prevalent conceptions of race and gender. Maya Ramos Smith's examination of dance in Mexico between 1867 and 1910 is essential to the analysis of singer-dancer Amalia Gómez and the can-can within the broader context of dance in Mexico and conceptions of gender.<sup>87</sup> Additional scholars such as Leonora Saavedra (2001, 2007) and Alejandro Madrid (2003, 2009) have explored the many social, cultural, and ideological components in Mexican opera of the twentieth century, but not the nineteenth century. Their studies of Mexican opera, compositional style, and national identity inform my analytical approach to the operas *Ildegonda* and *Guatimotzín*. This dissertation then draws from existing literature on opera

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<sup>86</sup> For example see Karl Bellinghausen, *Melesio Morales: Catálogo de Música* (Mexico City: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Centro Nacional de Investigación, Documentación e Información Musical Carlos Chávez, 1999); *Melesio Morales: Mi Libro Verde*, ed. Karl Bellinghausen (Mexico City: Conaculta, 1999); Eugenio Delgado and Aurea Maya, "La Opera Mexicana en el Siglo XX", *La Música Mexicana del Siglo XX* (Mexico City: FCE, 2007). Aurea Maya, compiler, *Melesio Morales (1838–1908): Labor Periodística* (Mexico City: CENIDIM, 1994); Ricardo Miranda, "El Espejo Idealizado: un Siglo de Opera en México (1810–1910)," *La Ópera en España e Hispanoamérica: Una Creación Propia: Madrid, 29.XI-3.XII de 1999*, ed. Alvaro Torrente and Emilio Casares Rodicio (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 2001), 143–186; Robert Stevenson, *Music in Mexico* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1952).

<sup>87</sup> Maya Ramos Smith, *Teatro Musical y Danza en el México de la Belle Epoque (1867–1910)* (Mexico City: Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana y Grupo Editorial Gaceta, 1995).

and music in Mexico, while also illuminating the diverse genres being performed and their connections to broader cultural and intellectual trends.

### **Chapter Outlines**

Chapter two demonstrates how the Mexican operas *Ildegonda*, by Melesio Morales, and *Guatimotzín*, by Aniceto Ortega, reflect contesting ideologies and goals for Mexico's future. While many subscribed to the notion that, in order to succeed as an independent country Mexico needed to emulate Europe as much as possible, others saw a need to incorporate aspects of Mexican history and culture into a new independent identity. Morales's *Ildegonda* relies entirely on Italian musical and literary influences, and therefore is consistent with the conception of Mexico's future as a "European" nation. Ortega's *Guatimotzín* includes Mexican indigenous history and folk music with elements from nineteenth-century Italian opera. This combination suggests that Mexico could retain its own unique identity while becoming a legitimate nation in the eyes of Europe.

Chapter three examines the 1871 production of *Guatimotzín* and its reception, illustrating how the composer, performers, and critics negotiated the prevalent conceptions of mestizaje and mestizo through this Italian-style opera on an indigenous subject. The literary and musical depiction of the Aztec Cuauhtémoc and Princesa as quasi-civilized mestizos stood in contrast to Mexican politicians' and journalists' justification for "civilizing" Mexico's indigenous peoples. The depiction of Cuauhtémoc in the libretto and the Italianate musical style of the aria and duet of Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa in *Guatimotzín* further emphasize their performance of indigenous-as-mestizo. Lastly, the critical responses to *Guatimotzín* illustrate critics' ambivalence towards ideals of mestizaje and also reveal how

Enrico Tamberlick and Angela Peralta negotiated their place in society through the lens of mestizaje.

Chapter four explores how three performers in the opera scene, singer-dancer Amalia Gómez, opera singer Angela Peralta, and operatic tenor Enrico Tamberlick both reinforced and challenged societal gender norms in late nineteenth-century Mexico City. Amalia Gómez, a leading singer and dancer in zarzuelas, challenged notions of morality, the idolization of France, and women's power, which resulted in a discourse of the body in reception of the can-can in Mexico City. Angela Peralta posed a different set of problems for late nineteenth-century Mexican ideas of femininity because, though her appearance and professional ambition were not consistent with gendered expectations, Peralta became an "ideal" woman through critics' descriptions of her voice. Enrico Tamberlick's voice and his role of Cuauhtémoc deviated from "masculine" characteristics in opera and Mexican society. Mexican critics and Ortega recast Tamberlick's "pure" voice and Cuauhtémoc's passive "femininity" as confirmation of both men's honor and civility.

A study so constructed will illustrate the intricate connections between performance and identity, compositional style and social structure, as well as critical reception and representations of race and gender in nineteenth-century Mexico. It will contribute to scholarship on nineteenth-century opera outside of Europe, as well as to discussions of gender and racial identity in the construction of the Mexican nation. The singers, critics, composers, and works in late nineteenth-century Mexico played an important role in establishing the worldwide circulation of opera culture, including its musical characteristics, performance norms, as well as social and economic associations. The many participants in the Mexico City opera scene negotiated both individual and national identities through opera,

illustrating the power of individual agency in both reinforcing and challenging cultural institutions, such as racial and gender hierarchies, through performance.

## CHAPTER 2

### MEXICAN OPERA AND EUROPEAN LEGITIMACY: “THE ITALY OF THE NEW WORLD”

“They come to [Mexico] to pervert it, demoralize it, to arm it, as they say vulgarly, without any benefit we must, or better said, we must follow them...”<sup>88</sup>

In his 1892 article about the government’s encouragement of Spanish immigration to Mexico, “Oscar” objected to Spanish immigrants on multiple grounds. It brought moral corruption and increased the possibility of imperial power (as it “arms itself”) in Mexico. Most importantly, he saw no benefits for the Mexican people in the continued emulation of Spain, and possibly Europe in general. “Oscar” was fighting against the agenda promoted by President Díaz, and Presidents González and Juárez before him: European immigration as a fountain of progress, a way to “civilize” the Mexican population.<sup>89</sup> For many intellectuals, opera companies represented such a vehicle of “civilization,” and they hoped that the values

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<sup>88</sup> “Vienen al país a pervertirlo, a desmoralizarlo, a *armarse*, como vulgarmente se dice, sin que ningún beneficio les debamos, o mejor dicho, les debemos los siguientes,” Oscar, *El Tiempo*, May 1892.

<sup>89</sup> Aimer Granados, “De los *unos* y los *otros* en la conformación de la nación étnica y del nacionalismo mexicano a fines del siglo XIX,” *Imágenes e Imaginarios sobre España en México, siglos XIX y XX*, ed. Agustín Sánchez Andrés, Tomás Pérez Vejo, and Marco Antonio Landavazo (Mexico City: Editorial Porrúa and Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad Michoacana, 2007), 234.

and tastes of these singers would spread to the Mexican people.<sup>90</sup> The government's and Mexican elites' demand for foreign opera companies had an unexpected result: this influx of opera companies, especially from Europe, made it difficult for Mexican opera composers and singers to establish careers in Mexico City. A few Mexican composers, however, did have their operas premiered in Mexico City, but their success was fleeting. No Mexican operas remained in the repertory of opera companies in Mexico or elsewhere. In the late nineteenth-century, two such Mexican operas, *Ildegonda* and *Guatimotzín*, premiered in Mexico City to rave reviews. Despite their short-lived success, these operas reveal much about the Mexico City scene and surrounding Mexican culture.

The stylistic and production differences between the Mexican operas *Ildegonda* and *Guatimotzín*, respectively, not only illustrate the importance of opera and its European performers and impresarios as perceived “missionaries” of European culture, but also as a gauge for values and tastes within the opera scene and Mexican society as a whole. Melesio Morales's *Ildegonda*, written and premiered during the French occupation in 1866, reflects the conception of Italy as the utmost authority in opera.<sup>91</sup> Mexican audiences still considered Italian performing companies and operas by famed composers like Bellini and Verdi the best.

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<sup>90</sup> This process was inherently flawed, as opera prices prevented most non-elites from attending opera performances in Mexico City. Therefore, opera companies were unlikely to influence members of the middle or lower classes, those considered least “civilized.”

<sup>91</sup> While one could read this preference for Italian opera as resistance to French influence, it actually reflects the lag in operatic tastes between Italy, France, and Mexico—Mexican audiences preferred Italian operas the early part of the nineteenth-century to all other works. This becomes clearer in the 1890s, when Mexican audiences first experience what they deem Wagner's “boring” operas. See for example: Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera, “Oyendo a Wanger,” *Obras, Espectáculos*, selected and edited by Elvira López Aparicio (Mexico City: UNAM, 1985), 92; cited in Miranda, “El Espejo Idealizado: Un Siglo de Opera en México (1810–1910),” *Opera en España y Hispanoamerica: Actas del Congreso Internacional La Opera en España e Hispanoamérica*, vol. 2 (Madrid, 1999), 155.



These Italian composers' works served as models for Mexican composers who sought to demonstrate their own mastery of the genre. Thus, acceptance by Italian audiences served as the utmost goal for opera composers, as seen in the focus of Mexican critics on *Ildegonda*'s Italian premiere. In contrast, Aniceto Ortega del Villar composed *Guatimotzín* with the support of an Italian singer (Enrico Tamberlick) and impresario (Enrico Moderatti). In *Guatimotzín*, he incorporated elements of Mexico's unique history while also employing standard forms of Italian opera. *Ildegonda* and *Guatimotzín* therefore reflect divergent approaches to Mexican opera, especially in their negotiations of European influence.

Mexico's continual efforts to combat and prevent imperial conquests from both Europe and the United States throughout the nineteenth century created an environment in which two philosophical camps debated the "correct" path of nation building in Mexico. Here nation building is defined as a political project dedicated to the strengthening, integration, and "modernization" of society.<sup>92</sup> It does not require foreign agency to react against and define itself. For example, when Mexican nationalists advocated the rejuvenation of their nation, they invoked national myths and aspirations such as the bravery of Cuauhtémoc, parading patriotic loyalties as part of the nation-building project and discourse.<sup>93</sup>

Many Mexican politicians and intellectuals, especially Porfirio Díaz and his followers, believed the most valid approach to solidifying and unifying Mexico was to copy Europe's, especially France's and Spain's, economic policies, social structures, and cultural values and expressions. This was especially popular among the upper classes, many of whom

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<sup>92</sup> Alan Knight, "Peasants into Patriots: Thoughts on the Making of the Mexican Nation," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 10, no. 1 (1994): 139.

<sup>93</sup> Knight, "Peasants into Patriots," 139.

were European or mestizo, and whose elevated cultural and social position relied in part on the perpetuation of colonial ideals and hierarchies of race and culture. Those systems valued white skin and European tastes in elements such as art and fashion. Other intellectuals, such as Ignacio Altamirano, advocated the incorporation or retention of Mexican culture in the new formulation of the nation, and especially in artistic culture. While he supported increased “civilization” of the Mexican people, Altamirano worried that Mexico would lose its particular history and culture in the process. He believed that the colonial dichotomy between indigenous/barbarous and European/civilized had made Mexicans ashamed of their own cultures.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, he viewed the “colonial habit” of privileging the European over the indigenous as an impediment to the creation of a sense of national identity in Mexico.<sup>95</sup> Altamirano hoped that educating the masses would help to eradicate the devaluation of Mexican culture. The range of prevalent conceptions of Mexico’s past and future are reflected in the Mexico City opera scene in general and Melesio Morales’s *Ildegonda* (1866) and Aniceto Ortega’s *Guatimotzín* (1871) in particular. The librettos, musical styles, and construction of *Ildegonda* and *Guatimotzín* demonstrate the extent to which Mexicans struggled to define a national culture.

The composition and reception of Melesio Morales’s *Ildegonda* revolve around the work’s relationship to European cultural ideas. They remain consistent with the conception of Mexico as primarily European, rather than as a mixture of indigenous cultures and

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<sup>94</sup> Ignacio Altamirano, “Introducción,” *Viaje a Oriente* (Trip to the Orient) by Luis Malanco (Spain: 1882), npn; quoted in Thea Pitman, “Mexican Travel Writing: The Legacy of Foreign Travel Writers in Mexico, or Why Mexicans Say They Don’t Write Travel Books,” *Comparative Critical Studies* 4, no. 2 (2007): 215–216.

<sup>95</sup> Ignacio Altamirano, *Obras completas* II, ed. Nicole Girón (Madrid: Escritos de literatura y arte, 1988), 229–230; quoted in Pitman, “Mexican Travel Writing,” 216.

European customs. As Manuel Payno noted, by modeling itself on Europe, even becoming part of the French Empire, Mexico could not only gain a patina of stability and order, which would encourage greater trade and investment from Europe.<sup>96</sup> The emulation of Europe could extend into the cultural realm, in which Mexican elites imported fashion, books, and music from Europe. Such a demonstration of refined tastes in Mexico would help to depict the nation as closer to “civilized” Europe than so-called “unrefined” indigenous Mexican cultures. The development of a Mexican style of opera based on the established composers of Italy then served two purposes: it illustrated the ability of Mexican composers to write “European” works, and encouraged the demand for sophisticated European entertainment among “civilized” Mexican audiences. As Altamirano stated in his newspaper *El Renacimiento*, Morales’s *Ildegonda* proved the disposition of the Mexican people for music, and would lead Europeans to say that in music “Mexico is the Italy of the New World.”<sup>97</sup>

Morales chose to set a libretto by Italian writer Temistocle Solera that was already popular in nineteenth-century Italian opera, and numerous Italian composers before and after Morales set the story to music. The prosody of the texts of individual arias and duets also fits established syllabic and rhyme patterns within nineteenth-century Italian poetry and other opera librettos. Morales’s compositional style relies heavily on those of Bellini and Verdi in its use of long introductions and in the construction of each piece within the models of lyric form. The close resemblance of the lovers’ duet “Solo un’alba e vedremo” in *Ildegonda* to

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<sup>96</sup> Barbara A. Tenenbaum, “Manuel Payno, Financial Reform, and Foreign Intervention in Mexico, 1855–1880,” *Liberals, Politics, and Power: State Formation in Nineteenth-century Latin America*, ed. Vincent C. Peloso and Barbara A. Tenenbaum (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 220–221.

<sup>97</sup> “Mexico es la Italia del Nuevo Mundo.” Ignacio Altamirano, “Crónica de la Semana,” *El Renacimiento*, 23 May 1869.

“Un dí felice,” from Verdi’s *La traviata* suggest a conscious effort on Morales’s part in the composition of *Ildegonda* to model certain numbers on famous pieces from the Italian school.

The representation of *Ildegonda* as primarily European was supported by articles about and by Morales concerning his perception of the opera and his compositional style as inspired by and derived from the Italian masters, such as Rossini, Donizetti, Bellini, and Verdi. This emphasis on his association with Europe suggests that Morales was conscious of the symbolic value of European opera in both the Mexican opera scene, as well as the view of Mexican opera abroad. The reception of *Ildegonda* in Mexico, particularly after the Italian premiere, validated Morales’s assertion by emphasizing the similarities between *Ildegonda* and operas by Italian composers, and his new-found success and recognition in Italy, while still portraying Morales’s success abroad as a sign of Mexico’s potential. The focus on European sources and models in attaining artistic legitimacy in the composition and reception of *Ildegonda* mirrored Mexican politicians’ and elites’ efforts to copy European customs, instead of embracing Mexico’s unique history and cultures.

In contrast, an 1869 theatrical work about Malinche (Cortés’s indigenous mistress, guide, and interpreter) used popular song forms such as *jarabes*, a type of regional folk dance, and premiered at the Teatro Principal in Mexico City to enthusiastic reception.<sup>98</sup> This increased attention to indigenous heritage in this work as well as in *Guatimotzín* was not surprising considering the resurgence of Benito Juárez as President after the defeat of the French in 1867. For example, the investigation of Indian languages begun by Francisco Pimentel and Manuel Orozco y Berra in the 1860s continued in the 1870s and 1880s in the

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<sup>98</sup> Otto Mayer-Serra, *Panorama de la Música Mexicana: Desde la Independencia Hasta la Actualidad* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1941), 115–116.

work of Antonio García Cubas. And, by 1867 the government recognized Cuauhtémoc as a national hero, which eventually led to the impressive monument constructed in Mexico City beginning in 1877.<sup>99</sup>

The differing relationships of *Ildegonda* and *Guatimotzín* to European styles and models correlate with varying images of Mexico's future and its place among the "civilized" nations, such as France and Spain. The debate over the extent of European influence in Mexico continued well into the twentieth century, and combinations of ideologies were common—for example, maintaining financial reliance on Europe and the United States, while exploring and possibly recovering aspects of Mexican history. Unlike Altamirano, neither Morales nor Ortega spoke openly of their opinions concerning the impact of copying European customs and tastes. Therefore, their musical compositions do not necessarily reflect their personal views, but rather popular ideas from this period in Mexican history. The separation is especially important when considering the reception of these works, which was not only affected by the authors' opinions, but also by the performers' interpretations of individual roles. The critics' emphasis on the Italian influences and subsequent successes of both Morales and *Ildegonda* could demonstrate, for instance, both the significance of Italian taste and acceptance for critics, and the faithfulness of the singers to the recognized sounds of *bel canto* and Verdian opera. Thus, the operas, their composers, styles, performers, and reactions to them must be viewed as part of a larger ideological movement that sought to attain cultural and artistic legitimacy for Mexico, rather than as statements of personal beliefs.

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<sup>99</sup> Charles A. Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 221.

## **Developing a Mexican Identity: Ideologies, Politics and Music**

The period 1866 to 1871 encompassed drastic changes in the political and social conditions of Mexico and its people, particularly in intellectual and government approaches to imperial rule, liberalism, immigration, and Mexico's place in the world. Three years after the French Intervention began in 1861, the Habsburg Prince Maximilian came to power in Mexico as a representative of Napoleon III's Empire. Maximilian and Napoleon's successes in Mexico were due in part to the support of the French-conservative coalition of Mexican immigrants. After the defeat of the conservatives in the Reform Wars of 1857-61 in Mexico, the conservatives fled to France, and reported Mexico's want and need for a monarchical Catholic rule similar to colonial times. Mexico then became a new target for Napoleon III's imperialist aspirations in the Americas, while the start of the Civil War in the United States meant there would be little intervention in Mexico by the United States government. Mexican conservative-imperialists supported Maximilian's reign in Mexico, and believed it provided the best opportunity for increased economic stability and "civilizing" the Mexican population. European rule would likely attract foreign visitors, as well as foreign capital, which could help to fund Maximilian's and the conservatives' projects.

Under Maximilian, French influence flowed into Mexican society, especially Mexico City, in areas such as literature, education, art, and music. The French intervention and occupation profoundly impacted the upper echelons of Mexican society, whose power as an oligarchy remained strong, even after French rule ended. These elites, including party executives, governors, senior administrators, export landowners and urban bourgeoisie, held sway over the rest of Mexican society through economic domination and the ability to

impose their principles and judgments by fraud or force.<sup>100</sup> As Ignacio Altamirano stated, these members of the social and political high society sought the “frenchification” of Mexican society, particularly in the economic and cultural sectors. This desired transformation of Mexico had a sense of urgency because of the continued threat of military, economic, religious, and cultural interference from Europe and especially the United States.<sup>101</sup> In order to prevent external incursions on Mexican independence, it was imperative to prove Mexico’s legitimacy, perhaps even surpassing the European models.

In opera, the lack of a stable artistic funding infrastructure made it difficult to sustain a Mexican opera company. Therefore, it was imperative to bring opera companies, particularly from Italy (French opera companies did not travel to Mexico until 1873). In an effort to maintain existing support from Mexican conservative-imperialists and gain the backing of Mexican moderates, Maximilian’s regime openly supported Mexican composer Cenobio Paniagua and singer Angela Peralta, who was a singer in his court.<sup>102</sup> The Emperor’s resources and sway were also invaluable to Melesio Morales in convincing Italian opera impresario Annibale Biacchi to stage *Ildegonda* with his company.

When Juárez and his army overtook the French in Mexico City in July of 1867, it marked the beginning of a restored Mexican republic. After Juárez was re-elected President of Mexico, he quickly addressed the need to prove Mexico was a politically viable country.

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<sup>100</sup> Douglas Richmond, “Comparative Elite Systems in Latin America and the United States, 1870–1914,” *Revista de Historia de América* 114 (1992): 63.

<sup>101</sup> Alan Knight, “The Peculiarities of Mexican History: Mexico Compared to Latin America, 1821–1992,” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, no. 24 (1992): 128.

<sup>102</sup> Paul Vanderwood, “Betterment for Whom? The Reform Period: 1855–1875,” *The Oxford History of Mexico*, ed. Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 386–87.

He wanted to demonstrate that Mexico was capable of attracting foreign visitors and of embracing “progress,” defined as submitting to as much Europeanization as possible.<sup>103</sup> Despite the difference in leadership, intellectuals and politicians such as Vicente Riva Palacio and Benito Juárez still argued that European colonization was the answer to the “social question” of how to better Mexican society politically, socially, and racially. By settling in unoccupied lands European immigrants would create a class of small property-holders in Mexico like those in the United States and France. They would also bring democracy to the feudal structure of the agrarian sector and help to “civilize” Indian communities.<sup>104</sup>

Juárez and his government sought to “civilize” Mexico, but partly because of his own political and personal background, the perception of how this might occur and what the result might look like changed. In their consolidation of power both during and after the French occupation, Liberals including Juárez had built upon the “creole patriotism” which in the words of Anthony Pagden, sought to “appropriate the past of the ancient Indian empires... for the glorification of a white American-born elite.”<sup>105</sup> The mythology of “national heroes” in the form of Aztec emperors who had resisted Spanish conquest was used to justify political separation from Spain and had served to unite the heroes of the first war for independence such as Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla (1753–1811) and Vicente Ramón Guerrero

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<sup>103</sup> Claudio Lomnitz, “Bordering on Anthropology: The Dialectics of a National Tradition in Mexico,” *Revue de synthèse* 4, no. 3–4 (2000): 356; Richmond, “Comparative Elite Systems,” 62.

<sup>104</sup> Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism*, 234–235.

<sup>105</sup> Anthony Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination: Studies in European and Spanish-American Social and Political Theory, 1513–1830* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 10.



Saldaña (1782–1831). Juárez wrote in his June 1867 manifesto, “We inherit the indigenous nationality of the Aztecs, and in full enjoyment of it, we recognize no foreign sovereigns, no judges, and no arbiters.”<sup>106</sup> As the child of Zapotec Indians, Juárez exemplified both the rise to power of such “creole patriots,” as well as the potential success of educating Mexico’s Indian population based on European models. Increased recognition of Mexico’s indigenous past did lead to more expressions of pride in the obstacles to independence Mexico had overcome, but this did not translate necessarily to acknowledgement of indigenous cultural and social heritages or to acceptance of present-day indigenous peoples and their ways of life. For example, Juárez rarely spoke of his own heritage, and had begun to adopt European culture as his own at the age of 12, when he started dressing in European clothes and speaking Spanish, eventually becoming a lawyer, and leaving his Zapotec identity behind.<sup>107</sup> His encouragement of European immigration then was part of his lifelong advocacy of European influence in order to better himself and other Mexicans.

Though Juárez did not emphasize his own indigenous heritage, his appearance (particularly his dark skin) and the public’s knowledge of his past led many newspaper columnists to associate his ascendancy to power with the Aztecs. They thereby connected Juárez, the first president of the Second Republic, to Mexico’s original rulers before European conquest. In a 16 August 1867 article about Juárez’s arrival in Mexico City, the newspaper *El Monitor Republicano* congratulated the leader on reclaiming Mexico from the French. By returning to the capital Mexico City, Juárez “recalling delicately the memories of

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<sup>106</sup> Brian R. Hamnett, *Juárez: Profiles in Power* (New York: Longman Publishers, 1994), 194; quoted in Natividad Gutiérrez, *Nationalist Myths and Ethnic Identities: Indigenous Intellectuals and the Mexican State* (Omaha, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 166.

<sup>107</sup> John Charles Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 155.

Aztec antiquity, has drawn with broad strokes the very sweet language of Anáhuac, the physiognomy of the knowledgeable and prudent Nezahualcoyotl.”<sup>108</sup> As both a Mexican and a man of indigenous heritage, Juárez reenacted the battle between the conquistadors and the Aztecs at Tenochtitlan through his 1867 entry into Mexico City, thereby referencing the “memories of Aztec antiquity.” His victory over France reminded Mexicans of the heart and history of their homeland, “Anáhuac,” the Aztec name for the Valley of Mexico, where Mexico City is located. Juárez is even compared to the great pre-conquest Mexican philosopher, warrior, poet, and ruler of Texcoco in the Valley of Mexico, Nezahualcoyotl. Even though Juárez did not emphasize his ancestry, his position of power and role in opposing French rule led many to associate him with those who originally fought against European conquest, the Aztecs.

In the context of Juárez’s perceived relationship with the indigenous heroes of Mexican history, it is perhaps surprising that Juárez and his government encouraged European immigration in order to help Mexico to avoid “premature decay,” as a result of worsening conditions of its economy, government, and communities.<sup>109</sup> In particular, the agricultural expertise of the German and Prussian populations could help to “elevate the laboring classes,” and aid in the economic development of the newly-independent Mexico. The French could then provide “finishing touches of civilization.”<sup>110</sup>

The symbolic significance of Juárez and the Second Republic led some to doubt the

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<sup>108</sup> “Desenterando [sic] con mano delicada los recuerdos de la antigüedad azteca, ha trazado á grandes rasgos en el dulcísimo idioma del Anáhuac, la fisonomía política dela sábio y prudente Nezahualcoyotl.” “Felicitación,” *El Monitor Republicano*, 16 August 1867.

<sup>109</sup> “Emigration to Mexico,” *The Two Republics*, 2 November 1867.

<sup>110</sup> “Emigration to Mexico,” *The Two Republics*, 24 August 1867.

value of European influence and immigration. They looked to Mexico's history for examples of how such foreign intervention could go awry. In the 12 December 1867 issue of *El Monitor Republicano*, a writer outlined the ongoing debate over the merits of immigration and "civilization," based on a column, "Europeos en México" (Europeans in Mexico), from the Mexico City newspaper *El Constitucional*. The Liberals had for "solid reasons" fought against the French regime, because of their own "painful experience" during the long period under Spanish rule, which had ended only in 1821. Encouraging European immigration would only attract those unwanted in European societies: "condemned men, exiles, vagabonds, criminals, who will spread everywhere Europe's corruption, vice, and curse on foreign shores."<sup>111</sup> European immigrants then would only add to the degeneracy of certain Mexican populations, not aid in the "civilization" of Mexico. Even more concerning, these same immigrant men also typified those who "try to overthrow European governments."<sup>112</sup> For a country that only recently reclaimed its independence and stability, such a threat was both an unnecessary risk and a potential disaster for the Juárez regime as it tried to secure the nation from further foreign intervention. The combination of increased attention to Mexico's indigenous history and the perceived danger of encouraging European immigration and influence in Mexico provided an alternative conception of Mexico's future, one informed by its cultural heritage and past experiences with European intervention. Mexican scholars such as Ignacio Altamirano argued that it might be possible to demonstrate that Mexico belonged among the "civilized" nations of Europe, while still acknowledging how its past and present

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<sup>111</sup> "Hombres condenados, proscritos, vagabundos, criminales, que van á sembrar por todas partes la corrupcion, el vicio y la maldicion de Europa sobre las playas extranjeras." *El Constitucional: Europeos en México*, *El Monitor Republicano*, 12 December 1867.

<sup>112</sup> "Los que procuran deshacerse los gobiernos europeos," *El Constitucional: Europeos en México*, *El Monitor Republicano*, 12 December 1867.

experiences differed from Europe.

Efforts to prove Mexico's legitimacy to Europe were not limited to the economic and political spheres. The establishment of a conservatory and the further development of a school for Mexican art music composers contributed to the idea that Mexico was "the Italy" of the Americas. But how were such actions seen as expressions of Mexico's unique cultures and/or national sentiment?

The National Conservatory of Mexico, founded in 1866 with the support of the Sociedad Filarmónica Mexicana (which had been established earlier that year by 74 men including Melesio Morales and Aniceto Ortega), furthered the conception of Mexico as the center of musical life in the Americas. It had a curriculum based solely on those of Italian conservatories, and the repertory consisted mainly of opera excerpts. The first public concert given by the Conservatory's students in 1866 included pieces from four Verdi operas (*Nabucco*, *Giovanna d'Arco*, *Macbeth*, *La forza del destino*). The conservatory on occasion also included compositions by Mexican composers in its curriculum and concerts, such as Joaquín Beristáin (1817–1839).<sup>113</sup> The Conservatory overall, however, reinforced the primacy of Italian opera composers and their operas in the Mexico City music scene.<sup>114</sup>

While many Mexican composers wrote in the style of Italian opera, others such as Aniceto Ortega composed dances and marches to foster national pride. During and after the French occupation, such music played an important role in expressing national pride for

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<sup>113</sup> Robert Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Books, 1952), 191–92.

<sup>114</sup> This is perhaps most evident in the downfall of the Mexican opera composer Cenobio Paniagua (1821–82). After its 1863 revival, critics deemed Paniagua's opera *Catalina de Guisa* a mere copy of Italian composer Errico Petrella's *Marco Visconti*, despite the fact that Paniagua had written his work in 1845, and Petrella's was not composed until 1855 (Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, 197).

Mexico in pieces such as Ortega's *Marcha Zaragoza*. When ruling Mexico in the mid-1860s, the Austrian Emperor Maximilian sought to create a sense of Mexican pride in the Austrian waltz by encouraging Mexican composers to write musical tributes in this style.<sup>115</sup> Starting in the 1830s Mexican dances including the *jarabe* and the *contradanza* were also popular in salon pieces by composers such as Tomás León and Julio Ituarte, which served to make vernacular music presentable for upper-class concert audiences.<sup>116</sup> Perhaps the most overtly nationalist piece celebrating the Second Republic was Ortega's *Marcha*. The *Marcha Zaragoza* became so popular that it was considered a second national anthem of Mexico.<sup>117</sup> Published in October of 1867, the cover illustration features an eagle with "victory" in its talons, looking up at the words "Cinco de Mayo," the date of General Zaragoza's famous battle.<sup>118</sup> At this concert, the Opera Orchestra played Ortega's other patriotic march, the *Marcha Republicana*, dedicated to Benito Juárez.<sup>119</sup> Both marches are in the European style, with no incorporation of Mexican folksongs or indigenous melodies or rhythms. In this sense, the marches were similar to Morales's *Ildegonda* in their strong reliance on European models, but remain closely tied to Mexico's history and national pride.

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<sup>115</sup> Mayer-Serra, *Panorama de la Música Mexicana*, 118.

<sup>116</sup> Gerard H. Béhague, "Latin American Music, c. 1920–1980," *The Cambridge History of Latin America*: vol. X, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 309.

<sup>117</sup> Robert Stevenson, "Ortega del Villar, Aniceto," *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/20503> (accessed 2 August 2010).

<sup>118</sup> Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, 203.

<sup>119</sup> Manuel M. de Zamacona, "Teatro Nacional," *El Globo*, 22 October 1867.

## **Melesio Morales and *Ildegonda*: Mexican Mastery of Opera**

In late 1865 Melesio Morales began efforts to obtain a premiere of his opera *Ildegonda* in Mexico City. He had experienced many difficulties in convincing an impresario to stage his first opera, *Romeo y Julieta* (finished in 1857), and remained frustrated by the lack of support for Mexican composers. For *Romeo y Julieta* he had re-done the orchestration three times in unsuccessful attempts to convince the impresario Max Maretzek to produce the opera.<sup>120</sup> For the same opera, promised governmental monetary support was pulled at the last minute, and the opera was finally presented in January of 1863, due to help from the Italian singer Roncari.<sup>121</sup>

Morales encountered even more obstacles during his efforts to premiere *Ildegonda* in Mexico City. Like *Romeo y Julieta*, *Ildegonda* was based on a famous nineteenth-century Italian libretto, and strongly reflected styles and forms of Italian operas from the *bel canto* and mid-century works by Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi. Thus, as a representative work from Morales's operatic oeuvre, *Ildegonda* exemplified an essentially Italianate school of Mexican opera composition. It was consistent with Morales's self-representation as quasi-European, and with intellectuals' conceptions of European influence as a positive asset to Mexico. In addition, the opera helped to demonstrate Mexico's potential as a budding "European" nation. Perhaps such a composition could prove Mexicans' artistic and cultural legitimacy as a "civilized" people in the eyes of Europe, if it received enough exposure in Mexico and abroad. The significance of *Ildegonda* in forming a reputation for Mexico was compounded by the Italian premiere and its coverage in the Mexico City press, which

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<sup>120</sup> Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, 198.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

depicted both Morales and *Ildegonda* as national icons and emissaries of Mexico's post-occupation culture in Europe.<sup>122</sup>

Morales's literary and musical influences and sources for *Ildegonda* portray Mexican opera as derived from and largely based upon that of Italy, with little if any incorporation of aspects of Mexican music or cultural traditions. His choice of libretto, language, musical forms, and styles demonstrate direct influences from composers such as Bellini and Verdi, and suggests that he modeled *Ildegonda* on excerpts from operas including *La traviata*. The libretto, by Verdian librettist Temistocle Solera, is set in Medieval Italy. It had previously been set to music by Italian and Spanish composers, and was consistent with patterns of Italian prosody, including both syllabic and rhyme schemes (*versi lirici* and *versi sciolti*). As seen in *Ildegonda*'s aria "Quai memorie trafitto mio core," Morales's compositional style maintains the prosody patterns, and is consistent with lyric form, including the phrase construction, harmonic relationships, and setting of text that characterize operas by Bellini and early Verdi. The love duet between *Ildegonda* and Rizzardo, "Solo un'alba e vedremo," particularly resembles Verdi's "Un di felice" (*La traviata*, 1853) in both thematic materials and harmonic structure. The introduction of *Ildegonda*'s lament "Perdon Gran Dio" also reflects a tradition in operas by Bellini (*I puritani* and *Il pirata*) and Verdi (*Un ballo in maschera*, *Rigoletto*, *La traviata*) of pairing isolated sopranos with a sorrowful English horn or oboe solo. The literary and musical elements of *Ildegonda* therefore create an image of Mexican opera, Morales, and post-occupation Mexican arts as reliant on prescribed models and styles from Italy, as evident in published musical scores, contemporary writings by

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<sup>122</sup> *Ildegonda* was not well-received by critics in Europe. It was performed only once at the Teatro Pagliano in Florence. For examples of reviews, see the following: *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, 14 March 1869; *Boccherini*, 10 March 1869; and *La Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, 11 April 1869.

Morales, and reviews by Mexican critics.

The story of *Ildegonda*, based on an 1820 epic poem by Tommaso Grossi, was a staple of the nineteenth-century Italian opera repertory. It was adapted first into a libretto by Pietro Giannone (1792–1872). Italian composers Carlo Valenti (1829), Luigi Somma (1835), David Bini (1836), Aurelio Marliani (1837), Achille Graffigna (1841), and Oreste Carlini (1847) set Giannone’s version.<sup>123</sup> Temistocle Solera (1815-1878), a librettist associated with Verdi, then composed his own libretto and opera on *Ildegonda* (1840). Solera also wrote the libretti for Verdi’s *Oberto* (1839), *Nabucco* (1842) and *I Lombardi* (1843).<sup>124</sup> In the mid 1840s, Spanish composer Emilio Arrieta wrote an opera based on Solera’s libretto as part of his studies at the Milan Conservatory. It eventually premiered in 1849 at the Madrid royal palace.<sup>125</sup> Therefore by the time Morales began to write his *Ildegonda*, the story already had an established place in the Italian opera repertory.

The plot of *Ildegonda* reflects typical tropes in Italian opera in its use of a historical topic and the focal love story. It takes place in 1225 Milan, during the Crusades, and centers on forbidden love between Ildegonda and Rizzardo. Ildegonda’s father, Rolando, has promised her to Ermenegildo Falsabiglia, but she is secretly in love with Rizzardo.

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<sup>123</sup> Francisco Méndez Padilla, “Ildegonda y la ópera mexicana en el siglo XIX,” in accompanying booklet, *Ildegonda: Opera en Dos Actos con Libreto de Temistocle Solera*, performed by the Orquesta Sinfónica Carlos Chávez and the Coro de la Escuela Nacional de Música conducted by Fernando Lozano, Forlane UCD 16739--UCD 16740, 1995, compact disc, 7–8.

<sup>124</sup> John Black, “Solera, Temistocle,” in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/26137> (accessed 6 August 2010).

<sup>125</sup> Walter Aaron Clark, “Arrieta, Pascual Emilio,” in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/01343> (accessed 6 August 2010).



Ildegonda and Rizzardo meet and swear eternal love, though they can never be together. After witnessing the scene between Ildegonda and Rizzardo, her brother Roggiero confronts Rizzardo and is killed by Rizzardo in a duel. Ildegonda's father then swears vengeance on Rizzardo for the death of his son. Act II opens with Rolando and his warriors plotting the death of Rizzardo. Meanwhile, Ildegonda has been imprisoned in the dungeon of a convent for refusing to marry her betrothed, Ermenegildo. Her maid, Idelbene, warns her of Rolando's plan, and pledges her faithfulness to Ildegonda.

Rizzardo comes to free Ildegonda, but is caught and taken prisoner by Rolando, and condemned to die for killing Roggiero. This causes Ildegonda to lose all sense of reason and fall into madness, a common occurrence for heroines in nineteenth-century opera.<sup>126</sup>

Rizzardo, thinking of Ildegonda as he waits to be executed, suddenly finds himself pardoned by Rolando because of Ildegonda's agony. Rolando and Rizzardo then go to tell Ildegonda that Rizzardo will live, but are too late. She cannot recover from her sickness, and dies in Rizzardo's arms.<sup>127</sup>

Morales's application of Temistocle Solera's libretto for *Ildegonda* maintained the patterns of syllabic content, rhyme scheme, and accent scheme typical of mid-century Italian operas, as seen in the six published excerpts. The prosody of "Quai memorie," Ildegonda's *cavatina* from Act I demonstrates Morales's continued adherence to established textual

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<sup>126</sup> See, for example, Susan Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera, 1815–1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Catherine Clément, *Opera, or The Undoing of Women*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender and Sexuality* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991; reprint 2002).

<sup>127</sup> Francisco Méndez Padilla, "Synopsis," in accompanying booklet, *Ildegonda: Opera en Dos Actos con Libreto de Temistocle Solera*, performed by the Orquesta Sinfónica Carlos Chávez and the Coro de la Escuela Nacional de Música conducted by Fernando Lozano, Forlane UCD 16739--UCD 16740, 1995, compact disc, 17–18.

models of Italian opera. The recitative conforms to the usual *settenari* (seven-syllable) and *endecasillabi* (eleven-syllable) lines of *versi sciolti*. The *cantabile* is in *decasillabo* (ten-syllable lines) stanzas with *piano* endings (final accent on the penultimate syllable). The *cabaletta* has *ottonario* stanzas (eight-syllable lines) with *piano* endings, and the final line of each stanza is seven syllables with a *tronco* ending (accented final syllable, which then counts as two syllables, making them eight-syllable lines).<sup>128</sup>

In Act II, scene two, Ildegonda and her maid Idelbene go to a secret rendezvous with Rizzardo in the palace garden. As they walk, they hear Ildegonda’s father and brother planning to kill Rizzardo if Ildegonda refuses her betrothed, Ermenegildo. In “Quai memorie al trafitto mio core,” Ildegonda expresses conflicting emotions—love for Rizzardo, fear of her father’s vengeance, and longing for her dead mother. The *cavatina* begins with a recitative of seven and eleven-syllable lines (t= *tronco*):

**TABLE 2-1: “Quai memorie,” recitative text**

Italian text	Syll no.	English translation
Le udisti?	(4)	<i>Did you hear him?</i>
Oh, voi felici ch’ergete a Dio la voce, Libere il core di mondano affetto!	11 11	<i>Happy you who raise your voice to God, Free the heart of worldly affection!</i>
Ch’io respiri quest’aura!	7	<i>That I breathe this aura!</i>
Insana gioja, a me cagion di morte, La pur s’aggira! Amica t’avvicina!	11 11	<i>Insane joy, for me cause of death, It only surrounds! Friend come to me!</i>

The use of seven- and eleven-syllable lines was common in mid-century Italian opera recitatives, such as those in Francesco Piave’s libretto for *La traviata*. For example, at the beginning of Act II of *La traviata*, Alfredo sings a recitative with alternating lines of seven

<sup>128</sup> My analysis of prosody is based on the “Note on Italian Prosody” and Paolo Fabbri’s chapter, “Metrical and Formal Organization,” in *Opera in Theory and Practice, Image and Myth*, ed. Lorenzo Bianconi and Giorgio Pestelli, *The History of Italian Opera*, vol. 6 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 151–220.

and eleven syllables, which ends in a rhymed couplet. Instead of a rhyming couplet, the recitative in “Quai memorie” has an internal rhyme of “aggira” and “avvicina,” which serve to unite the final two phrases.

**TABLE 2-2: “Lunge da lei” (*La traviata*), recitative text**

<b>Italian text</b>	<b>Syll No.</b>	<b>Translation</b>
Lunge da lei per me non v’ha diletto... Volaron già tre lune Dacché la mia Violetta Agi per me lasciò, dovizie, amori...	11 7 7 11	There is no delight when she is away... Three months have already passed Since my Violetta Gave up the luxury, glitter, lovers...
E dal soffio d’amor rigenerato Scordo ne’ gaudii suoi tutto il passato.	11 11	And from breath, rejuvenated by love Forgetting about the joys of the past.

The *cantabile* of “Quai memorie” also remains consistent with established models of prosody in mid-nineteenth-century Italian opera. It is in *decasillabi*, or ten-syllable lines, with *piano* accents, an accent on the penultimate syllable of each line. Each stanza has a rhyme scheme of aabc (*a-ore, b-o, c-i*), with a *tronco* final line. The *decasillabi* was one of the most popular poetic meters in nineteenth-century Italian opera, and can be seen in works such as Amelia’s first aria in Act II of Verdi’s *Un ballo un maschera* (libretto written by Antonio Somma).<sup>129</sup> The *decasillabi* was seen as grander and easier to break into smaller pieces where impulse was needed.<sup>130</sup> In “Quai memorie” Solera uses the matched rhymes of the first and second stanzas to emphasize contrasting emotions, “core” and “amore” (heart and love) in the first stanza, “dolente” and “furente” (pained and furious) in the second. He also splits individual lines into smaller units through the placement of the subject, such as in

<sup>129</sup> *Carteggi verdiani*, ed. Alessandro Luzio, 4 vols. (Rome: Reale Accademia d’Italia, 1935–1947), I: 225; quoted in Fabbri, “Metrical and Formal Organization,” 200.

<sup>130</sup> Fabbri, “Metrical and Formal Organization,” 200.

“Qui Rizzardo” and “Ah! Pietosa la madre” in stanza number one, and “d’un padre furente” and “cui la madre” in stanza two. The opposing placements of “madre” (first unit) and “padre” (second unit) serve to further emphasize Ildegonda’s differing perceptions of each. Thus, Solera and Morales, like Somma and Verdi, make use of the “smaller pieces” within *decasillabi* for expressive purposes.

**TABLE 2-3: “Quai memorie,” *cantabile* text**

Italian text	Syll No.	English translation
Quai memorie al trafitto mio core!	10	<i>These memories to my pierced heart!</i>
Qui Rizzardo giuravami amore!	10	<i>Here Rizzardo swore love to me!</i>
Ah! Pietosa la madre in quel loco,	10	<i>Ah! Compassionate mother in this place,</i>
Mi diè speme, al mio pianto s’unì.	10 t	<i>Gave me hope, to my weeping united.</i>
Ohimè che sola lasciommi dolente,	11	<i>oh that only left me pained,</i>
agli sdegni d’un padre furente	10	<i>with the scorn of a furious father.</i>
(Sì la madre, la madre lasciommi)	10	<i>(Yes, mother, mother abandon me)</i>
Pria la morte che spegnere un foco	10	<i>First death that extinguishes a fire</i>
cui la madre è il Signor benedì.	10 t	<i>That mother and He blessed.</i>

For the *tempo di mezzo* and the *cabaletta* of “Quai memorie” Solera chose the most common meter in mid-century Italian opera, *ottonari*, with eight syllables per line. The dialogue between Idelbene and Ildegonda in the *tempo di mezzo* remains consistently in *ottonari*, with a *tronco* line to emphasize the separation between Idelbene’s lines and those of Ildegonda. Solera, like Piave in the sleepwalking scene of Verdi’s *Macbeth*, uses the *ottonari* to express the dramatic gravity of the situation—Ildegonda feels that she has lost her father, her mother, and her lover.<sup>131</sup> The heavy accentuation of the even number of syllables was particularly suited to strong dramatic situations, as is the case in “Quai memorie.” In this aria,

<sup>131</sup> David Rosen and Andrew Porter, eds. *Verdi’s “Macbeth”: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 26; quoted in Fabbri, “Metrical and Formal Organization,” 200.

Ildegonda triumphs over inner struggles between her father’s wishes and her love for Rizzardo, choosing love in “paradise.” Solera’s composition of the libretto and Morales’s construction of *Ildegonda* and particular arias like “Quai memorie” maintains the patterns and associations of elements within Italian prosody, especially in the mid-century librettos and operas of Verdi.

**TABLE 2-4: “Quai memorie,” tempo di mezzo, cabaletta texts**

<b>Italian text</b>	<b>Syll No.</b>	<b>English translation</b>
<b>Tempo di mezzo:</b>		
(Idel) Scaccia il duol che si t’accora	8	<i>Undo the pain that afflicts you</i>
Disperato il mal non è.	7 t	<i>It is not irreparable.</i>
(Ild) Madre mia! Se m’ami ancora,	8	<i>Mother mine! If you still love me,</i>
Fa che tosto io voli a te.	8	<i>Make it so that I at once go to you.</i>
<b>Cabaletta:</b>		
Oh, che allora dei mortali	8	<i>Oh, that of mortals then,</i>
Taceran gli sdegni infesti!	8	<i>Silence the haunted disdains!</i>
La narrandoti i miei mali	8	<i>Telling you of my afflictions</i>
Il mio sposo attenderò	7 t	<i>I will wait for my husband.</i>
Fra le gioje dei celesti	8	<i>Between the joys of the heavens</i>
Io già volo in paradiso:	8	<i>I already fly in paradise:</i>
(Ah!) Tu godrai nel mio sorriso,	8	<i>Ah! You will delight in my smile</i>
Nel tuo gaudio anch’io godrò	7 t	<i>I will also delight in your joy.</i>

Though Morales chose an Italian libretto, the most significant similarities to mid-nineteenth-century Italian opera appear in the musical composition and construction of individual pieces within *Ildegonda*. These arias and this duet from *Ildegonda* demonstrate Morales’s attention to standard forms of Italian opera, including the *cantabile-cabaletta* aria and *tempo d’attacco-cantabile-cabaletta* duet forms, harmonic and thematic structures, as well as recent stylistic developments. “Quai memorie al traffito mio core,” *Ildegonda*’s *cavatina* from Act I examined above, has the typical *cantabile-cabaletta* form, consisting of

a *recitative*, *cantabile*, *tempo di mezzo*, and *cabaletta*. The textual, melodic, and harmonic relationships of the phrase structures, particularly within the *cantabile* of “Quai memorie,” also fit the lyric forms of nineteenth-century Italian operas, as codified by scholars including Scott Balthazar, James Hepokoski, and Steven Huebner.<sup>132</sup> Like Ildegonda’s aria, the duet between Ildegonda and Rizzardo in Act I, “Solo un’ alba, e vedremo la croce,” is also constructed in a common Italian opera form, *cantabile-cabaletta*, and bears particular similarity to “Un dì felice,” from Verdi’s *La traviata*, in its melodic themes and harmonic structure. Morales’s compositional style in “Perdon Gran Dio,” Ildegonda’s Act II aria demonstrates influence from Bellini and Verdi, particularly in the association of a lyrical English horn solo with an “isolated” soprano.

The overall form of “Quai memorie” is consistent not only with Italian opera forms, but with modifications common in mid-nineteenth-century works by Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi. The recitative both reflects on the recent conversation between Ildegonda’s father and brother about killing Rizzardo, and sets up the conflict that will torment Ildegonda during the aria and the rest of the opera—the desire for Rizzardo and the need for her father’s love and approval. The recitative was usually used to set up the situation, a role codified in the works of Rossini.<sup>133</sup> Here it begins with a diminished-seventh chord, illustrating Ildegonda’s pain and uncertainty. The descending vocal lines gradually start higher and higher, reflecting the

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<sup>132</sup> For more on lyric form, see Scott Leslie Balthazar, “Evolving Conventions in Italian Serious Opera: Scene Structure in the Works of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi, 1810–1850,” PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1985; James A. Hepokoski, “Genre and Content in Mid-Century Verdi: ‘Addio del passato’ (‘La traviata’, Act III),” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 1, no. 3 (1989): 249–276; Steven Huebner, “Lyric Form in Ottocento Opera,” *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 117, no. 1 (1992): 123–147.

<sup>133</sup> John Rosselli, *The Life of Verdi*, in *Musical Lives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 42.

increasing tension leading into the *cantabile*. The line between the thematic material of this recitative and the *cantabile* become blurred when similar descending sigh-like lines appear throughout the *cantabile*, especially in the “closure” phrase of “A” and in the “B” section. It became common to incorporate themes from the *cantabile* in the recitative in Italian operas beginning in the 1830s, such as Elvira’s aria from Act II of Bellini’s *I puritani* (1835), “O rendetemi la speme.”<sup>134</sup>

The *cantabile* of “Quai memorie,” the slow first section after the recitative, consists of two thematic statements, the “A” part that conforms to the sixteen-measure phrase structure common in mid-century Italian opera, and a “B” section that incorporates internal expansion and a coda leading into a cadenza. The first part of the *cantabile*, in D-flat major, is a setting of the first stanza of *decasillabi* text, with one line of text per four-measure unit. These strongly-defined four-bar units were common in the works of Bellini, and Rossini incorporated this structure into his arias by the 1830s.<sup>135</sup> As seen in Figure 2-1, a new theme or version of a theme appears every four measures, and correspond to the following pattern: *a-b-a'-c*, one of many typical small-scale forms found in mid-century Italian opera arias.<sup>136</sup> The harmonic relationships between the phrases is somewhat irregular in that the final four bars (13-16) do not provide closure, but rather delay tonic until the beginning of the “B” section. The first four bars, *a*, emphasize tonic (D-flat major); measures four through eight

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<sup>134</sup> Scott Leslie Balthazar, “Evolving Conventions,” 236.

<sup>135</sup> Balthazar, “Evolving Conventions,” 43–55; for more on the structure of arias and melodies in Bellini’s operas, see Friedrich Lippmann’s book, *Vincenzo Bellini und die italienische Opera Seria seiner Zeit, Studien über Libretto, Arienform und Melodik* (Köln: Böhlau, 1969).

<sup>136</sup> Scott L. Balthazar, “Rossini and the Development of the Mid-Century Lyric Form,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 41, no. 1 (1988): 106–107.

stay on the dominant, (A-flat); with the return of a modified *a* theme, the harmonies again emphasize the tonic triad; the final phrase, *c*, is on the dominant and remains there until the text and melody of the “B” section starts four measures later. This delayed resolution enhances the perceptible instability of Ildegonda’s emotional state, and increases the building tension and frustration that will erupt with the repeated leaps to F5, G-flat5, and A-flat5 in the “B” themes.

**FIGURE 2-1: “Quai memorie,” form in A section of *cantabile***

Quai me - mo - rie al tra - fit - to mi - o co - re  
 I I b IV I  
 5 qui Riz - zar - do giu - ra - va - mi a - mo - re  
 9 ah! pie - to - sa la ma - dre in quel lo - co, la  
 I I IV I  
 13 ma - dre, mi diè spe - me, al mio pian - to su - ni.  
 V7 I 6/4 V7 I 6/4 V7

The second part of the *cantabile*, Figure 2-2, contains a combination of the four-measure phrases of prototypical lyric form and a more complex structure including an added line of text and musical phrase, as well as internal expansion and development, a coda, and a cadenza. The first three motives are each approximately four bars long (the first two phrases are 4.5 bars long, and the third phrase is four measures long). They also have the same patterns of melodic and harmonic function as the “A” section, *a-b-a'* with *a* and *a'* emphasizing the tonic (D-flat major) and *b* on the dominant. It is important to note that the



text of the third four-measure unit is an extra exclamation, “Sì, la madre, la madre lasciommi,” which refers textually and musically back to the first phrase, *a*. Thus, it does not function as most third phrases, providing motivic and harmonic development to lead back into the reprise of the *a* or *c* phrase. Here, that role is reserved for the extended fourth phrase.

The first expansion occurs in the fourth phrase, which lasts eight bars and features both repeated text and melodic material. The first four measures state two different themes, beginning in the tonic, D-flat, and becoming more and more harmonically unstable. The second four measures of the phrase begin with the same thematic material, but now transposed down a step, and with chromatic chords, rather than the diatonic accompaniment of the first statement, and ends in E-flat major. The final line of text cadences in E-flat major, and is also extended to eight measures through thematic and textual repetition. But in this phrase only the second two measures are modified, in order to emphasize the cadence in E-flat major. This is followed by two measures of cadential material in E-flat that leads into a restatement of the “B” section beginning with the fourth phrase. The melody and harmony remain the same, except that Morales transposes the added cadential portion into D-flat major, the tonic of the movement. The codetta leads in to a cadenza, which was commonly used in mid-century Italian opera arias to reinforce the closure of the *cantabile*.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Balthazar, “Evolving Conventions,” 222.



*mezzo* to establish a secondary key related to the tonic of the *cantabile* and/or *cabaletta* by a third.<sup>138</sup> Here, Idelbene begins with *parlante* phrases, in which her repeated declamatory lines provide a rudimentary counterpoint to the lyrical melody in the accompaniment. *Parlante* sections typically formed the base of *tempi de mezzo* in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>139</sup> The conversation between Idelbene and Ildegonda serves to transition from the lament of the *cantabile* to Idelbene's attempt to cheer up Ildegonda and provides motivation for the hopefulness of the *cabaletta*.

The showy F-major *cabaletta* of "Quai il memorie," characterized by fast descending passages and high leaps, has the tripartite form standard in Italian opera since the 1830s.<sup>140</sup> The divergence from the tonic of the *cantabile* (D-flat major) was seen as a way of preventing dramatic stasis, and this exact key change appears in Rolando's aria in Act III of Verdi's *La battaglia di Legnano* (1849).<sup>141</sup> As in a typical *cabaletta*, it begins with a full statement of the two stanzas of text and the thematic material (A), which is followed by a brief *pertichino*—B (interjection by another character in an aria).<sup>142</sup> In the *pertichino* Idelbene

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<sup>138</sup> Balthazar, "Evolving Conventions," 280.

<sup>139</sup> Julian Budden, "Parlante (ii)," In *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie. *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O007252> (accessed 11 August 2010).

<sup>140</sup> After the 1830s, composers (especially Verdi) experimented with eliminating one or two of these sections, adding instability and unpredictability to the *cabaletta*. For more on these changes, see Scott Leslie Balthazar, "The Forms of Set Pieces," in *The Cambridge Companion to Verdi*, ed. Scott Leslie Balthazar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 52.

<sup>141</sup> Balthazar, "Evolving Conventions," 320.

<sup>142</sup> "Pertichini," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie. *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*,

sings her *parlante* motive and text from the *tempo di mezzo*, and the movement ends with a repetition of the first section and a brief coda (A').<sup>143</sup> The virtuosic character of Ildegonda's vocal lines throughout the *cabaletta* reflect influence from earlier works by Rossini, Donizetti, and Bellini in the middle and late-nineteenth century, as the *cabaletta* in moderate time with little element of display became increasingly common.<sup>144</sup>

Though it strays somewhat from the prototypical phrase structure, Morales's *cabaletta* maintains the freedom for the singer to add ornamentation, and the sense of stasis and closure expected in a *cabaletta*. The main thematic material appears in three parts corresponding to the text, and stays in F major throughout. They are as follows: a) motives with the first stanza of text; b) contrasting motives with the first two lines of the second stanza; c) restatement of motives from the first part with the remaining two lines of text from the second stanza. Such characteristic predictability of thematic return and tonal stasis in the *cabaletta* provided a basis for singers to add embellishments, especially in the restatement.<sup>145</sup> With few exceptions the phrase structure and text setting in the *cabaletta* is compressed into two measures per line of text (instead of four), which condenses the first phrase into eight measures, instead of sixteen, but still in the same *a-b-a'-c* pattern as in the *cantabile* (see

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<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O007969> (accessed 11 August 2010).

<sup>143</sup> Morales and Solera, "Quai Memorie," 7–12; for more on the form of cabalettas, see the article, "Forms of Set Pieces," 52.

<sup>144</sup> Julian Budden, "Cabaletta," In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/04499> (accessed 12 August 2010).

<sup>145</sup> Balthazar, "The Forms of Set Pieces," 52.

Figure 2-3a).<sup>146</sup> And, like the *cantabile*, the first part is left harmonically unresolved on a dominant, which does not resolve to the tonic until the start of the second thematic portion. The brief part with contrasting themes consists of eight measures of repeated two-measure units, *a-b-a'-b'*, emphasizing the dominant, C major (see Figure 2-3b). This is followed by the return to the primary thematic group with new text.

**FIGURE 2-3: “Quai memorie” *cabaletta* themes**

a) Main theme group, first stanza of text

Or - che al - lo - ra de' mor - ta - li ta - ce  
 ran - gli - sde - gni in - fe - sti! la - nar - ran - do - ti i - miei  
 ma - vi li il mi-o spo-so atten-de - rò

b) Contrasting theme group, second stanza lines 1-2

fra le gio - ie dei ce - le - sti io già vo - lo in pa - ra - di - so  
 fra le gio - ie dei ce - le - sti io già vo - lo in pa - ra - di so

The *pertichino*, sung by Idelbene on the text from the *tempo di mezzo*, expands the *parlante* theme, now transformed into a full lyrical melody with antecedent and consequent

<sup>146</sup> Morales and Solera, “Quai memorie,” 7.

phrases. It ends with a sudden sigh from Ildegonda, which leads back into the A' section. This ornamented restatement is supplemented by a codetta, which offers more opportunity for virtuosic expression on high notes and leaps, as was common in the closing material of *cabalettas*.<sup>147</sup>

In the aria “Quai memorie” Morales employs established structures and characteristics of mid-century Italian opera works, such as the *cantabile-cabaletta* form, phrase structures and stylistic elements such as vehicles for vocal display. In other arias and duets from *Ildegonda*, Morales’s compositional choices remained consistent with the established forms and styles. He also references themes and topoi associated with specific composers and dramatic situations in opera, such as the main motive from Verdi’s duet “Un dì felice” (*La traviata*), and Bellini’s and Verdi’s treatment of the solo soprano lament.

The form of Ildegonda and Rizzardo’s duet “Solo un’ alba vedremo la croce” (hereafter called “Solo un’ alba”) in *Ildegonda* is consistent with the four movements standardized by Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi: *tempo d’attacco-cantabile-tempo di mezzo-cabaletta*, with an added coda. In addition, the main thematic material of the *cantabile* resembles that rhythmic pattern and melodic contour of the main motive from the duet “Un dì felice” from Verdi’s *La traviata*. The *tempo d’attacco* of “Solo un’ alba” is a hybrid that combines lyric statements and dialogue, found most commonly in the operas of Verdi.<sup>148</sup> In this duet, the recitative and dialogue alternate with lyric statements. Ildegonda begins with a recitative, followed by a lyric statement. Soon, Rizzardo joins her in a short line of parallel

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<sup>147</sup> Budden, “Cabaletta,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*.

<sup>148</sup> For a list of operas and arias that employ this arrangement, see Balthazar, “Evolving Conventions,” 333–334.

thirds and sixths, and then a dialogue leads into the *cantabile*.<sup>149</sup> The *tempo d'attacco* in “Solo un’ alba,” as in Verdi’s *tempi d’attacco*, also serves to modulate from the F-sharp minor of the previous aria (“Errante pellegrina”) through D-minor to the f-minor *cantabile* of the “Solo un’ alba.”<sup>150</sup>

The *cantabile* of “Solo un’ alba” reflects currents in mid-nineteenth-century Italian opera composition by combining different trends, such as parallel dissimilar statements and a unison coda. The *cantabile* begins with Rizzardo singing two eight-measure phrases, followed by an eight-measure coda.<sup>151</sup> His main motive resembles Alfredo’s opening phrase in “Un dì felice” in the use of leaps of a third, uneven rhythms, and overall contour. While Rizzardo’s is in F-minor, Alfredo’s is in F-major, perhaps reflecting the contrasting moods (Rizzardo sings about having to leave Ildegonda, while Alfredo remembers when he first fell in love with Violetta).

**FIGURE 2-4: Rizzardo’s motive vs. Alfredo’s motive**

a) “Solo un’ alba,” Rizzardo’s *cantabile* theme

So-lo un al-bae ve-dre-mo la cro-ce vol-teg-gia-re terr-i-bi-leal ven-to

5  
co-meun a-qui la alte-rae fe-ro-ce co-me stel-la che annun-ci spa-ven-to

<sup>149</sup> This uneven treatment of the voices in the *tempo d'attacco* was increasingly used by Verdi for dramatic effect after the 1850s (Balthazar, “The Forms of Set Pieces,” 53).

<sup>150</sup> Balthazar, “The Forms of Set Pieces,” 53.

<sup>151</sup> Melesio Morales and Temistocle Solera, “Solo un’ alba vedremo la croce” (Milan: F. Lucca, 1869), 3–5.

b) “Un dì felice,” Alfredo’s *cantabile* theme

Un dì fe - li - ce e - te - re - a mi ba - le - na - ste innan -

8 te, e da quel dì - tre - man - te vis - si d'i - gne - to a - mor.

16 Di quell' a - mor quell' a - mor - che pal - pi to, dell' un - i - ver - so, dell' un - i - ver so in - te - ro.

As in “Un dì felice,” the female character, Ildegonda, follows the tenor hero’s lyrical passages with a soaring melodic statement that consists of virtuosic descending high passages.<sup>152</sup> This use of a differing thematic character and mood from the first statement is most prevalent in operas by Verdi, as seen in Scott Balthazar’s catalogue of 43 duets by Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi.<sup>153</sup> Morales’s slow movement or *cantabile* adheres to other expected characteristics of dissimilar statements, as well, such as the increased activity and change from major to minor (or vice versa) a change in key. Ildegonda’s portion has less predictable rhythmic patterns and is in D-flat major, instead of Rizzardo’s F minor.<sup>154</sup> This motive resembles Alfredo’s descending dotted-rhythm theme in “Un dì felice.”<sup>155</sup> The second part of Ildegonda’s statement is only twelve measures long, and includes interjections by Rizzardo. Her line consists of a sequence of secondary dominants that lead into Rizzardo’s

<sup>152</sup> Morales and Solera, “Solo un’ alba,” 5–6.

<sup>153</sup> Balthazar, “Evolving Conventions,” 394–396.

<sup>154</sup> This same change in key from F minor to D-flat major occurs in the slow movement of Abigail’s duet with Nabucco (*Nabucco*, Act III), “Oh di qual onta aggravasi.”

<sup>155</sup> Giuseppe Verdi, “Un dì felice eterea,” *La traviata* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1899), 40.



echo of Ildegonda’s original themes. In the coda, Ildegonda and Rizzardo sing part of her main eight-measure phrase in unison, each with their own text, and then alternate two-measure units of her motive. Morales’s adherence to established norm of Italian opera continued in the *tempo di mezzo* and the *cabaletta*.

**FIGURE 2-5: “Solo un’ alba,” Ildegonda’s *cantabile* motives**

Ah \_\_\_ t'in - fiam - mi la \_\_\_\_\_ vo - ce del \_\_\_\_\_

6  
san - to va Riz - zar - do al-la mes - ta cit - ta - de

The *tempo di mezzo* is a short transitional dialogue, like those that characterize Verdi’s duets, such as “Ecco ardite ed ululando” from *Giovanna d’Arco*. It moves the action ahead, as Ildegonda gives Rizzardo a cross and they get ready to pray, now looking to their future instead of the past. This advancement of the drama became increasingly important in the *tempo di mezzo* from the 1830s onward.<sup>156</sup> Their dialogue also transitions harmonically, as it modulates from D-flat major through F minor, finally arriving in F major for the *cabaletta*.

The *cabaletta* of “Solo un’ alba” begins with a traditional Rossinian presentation of the main themes by both characters singing together in thirds and sixths.<sup>157</sup> This occurs twice in F major, though the second time Ildegonda and Rizzardo have new text and Morales writes in extensive ornamentation. After another brief period of dialogue in D major, there is an *Allegro agitato* coda with themes derived from Ildegonda’s motivic material in the *cantabile*,

<sup>156</sup> Balthazar, “Evolving Conventions,” 451.

<sup>157</sup> For more on alternate ways of beginning the *cabaletta*, see Balthazar, “Evolving Conventions,” 454–459.

which now resemble Violetta’s secondary thematic group.<sup>158</sup> Here, Ildegonda and Rizzardo sing in unison, swearing fidelity to each other in their final goodbye. The overall conformity of Morales’s compositional structure and style in “Solo un’ alba” and its thematic and harmonic connections to Verdi’s famous duet “Un dì felice” reinforces Morales’s perceived association with established nineteenth-century Italian opera composers. The formal design of “Solo un’ alba” represents his overall approach to composing *Ildegonda*, which can also be seen in his references to other stylistic tropes of mid-nineteenth-century Italian opera.

**FIGURE 2-6: “Solo un’ alba” *cabaletta* vs. Violetta’s theme in “Un dì felice”**

a) “Solo un’ alba,” *cabaletta* coda theme

ah! vie - ni è ques - to è ques - to l'es-tre moad - di - o al  
 giu - ro - mio - fe - del sa - rò.

The musical notation for the coda theme of "Solo un' alba" is presented in two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It contains the melody for the first line of lyrics: "ah! vie - ni è ques - to è ques - to l'es-tre moad - di - o al". The second staff continues the melody for the second line of lyrics: "giu - ro - mio - fe - del sa - rò." The music features various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are also some dynamic markings and phrasing slurs.

b) “Un dì felice,” Violetta’s secondary theme

Non ar - duo tro - ve - re - te di-men - ti - car - mi al -  
 lo - ra, di - men - ti - car - mi di - men - ti - car - mi

The musical notation for Violetta's secondary theme in "Un dì felice" is presented in two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a 3/8 time signature. It contains the melody for the first line of lyrics: "Non ar - duo tro - ve - re - te di-men - ti - car - mi al -". The second staff continues the melody for the second line of lyrics: "lo - ra, di - men - ti - car - mi di - men - ti - car - mi". The music features triplet rhythms and various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes. There are also some dynamic markings and phrasing slurs.

In *Ildegonda*’s pleading *gran scena e romanza* “Perdon Gran Dio! Se il crimine,” Morales features a long introduction with an English horn solo, which is similar in idea and type to Bellini’s “Col sorriso d’innocenza” (*I puritani*), Verdi’s “Addio del passato” (*La*

<sup>158</sup> Verdi, “Un dì felice,” 41–42.

*traviata*) and “Tutte le feste al tempio (*Rigoletto*), and Donizetti’s “Il faut partir” (*La Fille du régiment*).<sup>159</sup> As James Hepokoski explains, such a pairing of the oboe or English horn with a lonely or isolated soprano was a common topos in nineteenth-century Italian opera, especially in the works of Verdi. When she sings this *romanza*, Ildegonda indeed feels abandoned by her mother (now dead), her father (disowned), and Rizzardo (likely killed by her father). Like the clearest examples of this tradition “Perdon Gran Dio” is in a minor key (D minor), and features a closing section in the parallel major (D major).<sup>160</sup> In terms of formal structure, Ildegonda’s *romanza* deviates from the expected strophic form of such arias in that the restatement of A is abbreviated and features a women’s choir. This departure, like that in Amelia’s “Ma dall’ arido” (*Un ballo in maschera*) reflects her flouting of social expectations through her personal choices.<sup>161</sup> Morales’s incorporation of this aria type into *Ildegonda* strengthened his opera’s connection to works by “the Italian masters,” and furthered his own self-representation as a legitimate opera composer in the eyes of Mexican and Italian audiences alike.

Before the Italian premiere of *Ildegonda*, Morales’s depiction as a Mexican composer established in Italian opera circles of Mexico and Europe was deemed problematic because of his Mexican origin in his own descriptions of his operatic style and in the critical reception

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<sup>159</sup> A *gran scena* is an episode of recitative and arioso, with a particularly dramatic character, usually for a single role. A *romanza* is a type of French song common in nineteenth-century French *opéra comique*, usually with a narrative component. James A. Hepokoski, “Genre and Content in Mid-Century Verdi: ‘Addio del passato’ (‘La traviata’, Act III),” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 1, no. 3 (1989), 259–260.

<sup>160</sup> Hepokoski, “Genre and Content in Mid-Century Verdi,” 260.

<sup>161</sup> Melina Esse, “‘Chi piange, qual forza m’arretra’: Verdi’s Interior Voices,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 14, nos. 1–2 (Primal Scenes: Proceedings of a Conference Held of the University of California, Berkeley, 30 November–2 December 2001) (2002): 71.

of the work. After the premiere of *Ildegonda* in Florence, Morales moved into the sphere of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi, both in the eyes of critics and in his own descriptions of his style, which served to demonstrate Mexico's potential as the "Italy of the New World" for music.<sup>162</sup>

When Morales finally obtained a premiere for *Ildegonda* in January of 1866, he had a letter of introduction to the work published in the Mexico City newspaper *El Pajaro Verde*. He implores the audience to judge *Ildegonda* in isolation from the works of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer, and Verdi. He stated "I beg you to judge it isolated and to not try to find a composition superior or even equal to the scores that you are accustomed to hearing the immortal Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer, Verdi, and others."<sup>163</sup> He seems aware of the inevitable comparison between his opera and those the Mexico City audiences "are accustomed to hearing," by established composers of Italian opera. This could be a statement of humility, but it also reflects awareness of the hierarchy within the opera scene of Mexico City, and the plight of Mexican composers unable to break through the dominance of European composers, especially those from Italy. Morales attempted to compose an opera worthy of the attention of Mexican audiences, but realizes that they are unlikely to consider it on even close to the same level as works by Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi, perhaps because of the music, but more likely because of his nationality.

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<sup>162</sup> "Mexico es la Italia del Nuevo Mundo." Ignacio Altamirano, "Crónica de la Semana," *El Renacimiento*, 23 May 1869.

<sup>163</sup> "A los que suplico la juzguen aisladamente y no crean encontrar una composición ni superior ni siquiera igual a las partituras que estan acostumbrados a oír de los inmortales Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Meyerbeer, Verdi, y otros." Melesio Morales, "*Ildegonda*," *El Pajaro Verde*, 27 January 1866; quoted in Melesio Morales, *Melesio Morales (1838-1908): Labor Periodística*, selection, introduction, notes, and newspaper bibliography by Aurea Maya (Mexico City: CENIDIM, 1994), 2.

Critics in the Mexico City newspaper *La Orquesta* noted with disappointment the Mexican public's lack of acceptance of Mexican composers because of their lack of European experience and nationality. In a 31 January 1866 review of the premiere of *Ildegonda* a critic in *La Orquesta* described the merits of the work. "It is a good opera, so good that it should have a long life and must be over time presented in more than one theater."<sup>164</sup> The critic then explained why this would not happen for *Ildegonda* or Morales in Mexico: "It is lacking for the Mexicans a very important thing, and without it they will never accept it as a product of genius, and an effort of the work of its author, and that is that Morales abandon his name and be called *Mellessi Morallini*."<sup>165</sup> Despite its fine quality, *Ildegonda* will not succeed in Mexico City as the foreign operas do because its composer is Mexican. Unless Morales changes his nationality, Mexican audiences will not consider his *Ildegonda* as reflective of his "genius" or "effort" in Italian opera composition. This representation of Morales and *Ildegonda* as deprived of opportunities for success because of their Mexican origin changed after Morales left in 1866 for further instruction in Europe, and obtained a premiere for *Ildegonda* in Florence.

After the 1869 premiere and positive reception of *Ildegonda* in Florence, Morales finally felt justified in connecting his opera and compositional style to the composers who inspired him, including Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi, Meyerbeer, and Gounod. In a letter published in the 21 October 1869 issue of *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, Morales explained that he

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<sup>164</sup> "Es una ópera buena, bastante buena, que ha de tener una larga vida y ha de ser con el tiempo representada en mas de un teatro." In "Ildegonda: ópera nueva en cuatro actos, original del maestro mexicano Melesio Morales," *La Orquesta*, 31 January 1866.

<sup>165</sup> "Fáltale para los mexicanos una cosa muy importante, y sin la cual jamas la aceptarán como un producto del génio y un esfuerzo del trabajo de su autor, y es que Morales abandone su nombre y se llame *Mellessi Morallini*," "Ildegonda: ópera nueva en cuatro actos, original del maestro mexicano Melesio Morales," *La Orquesta*, 31 January 1866.

had learned from those who came before him: he was simply one in a long line of Italian opera composers. As Rossini had learned from Cimarosa, Pacini studied under Rossini, Donizetti under Bellini and Mercadante, and Verdi followed the examples of Rossini, Mercadante, and Donizetti.<sup>166</sup> In composing operas like *Ildegonda*, Morales's goal was to "follow the musical religion of my father."<sup>167</sup> While before the Italian premiere, Morales sought to distance himself from the established composers of Italian opera, after the premiere he depicted his compositions as descended from the great Italian masters of opera, emphasizing their influence on his operas. He used the dominance of European tastes in Mexico to his advantage, and to suggest that Mexican opera was actually an outgrowth of Italy.

Mexico City critics also connected Morales's success in Italy to that of well-known opera composers, such as Rossini and Bellini. In a poem dedicated to Morales in the Mexico City newspaper *El Renacimiento* Luis G. Ortiz described Morales's experience in Italy: "You then brave, of the sacred laurel with which the temple coronated Rossi[ni] and Bellini, a leafy branch of the uprooted trunk, brought to your country, triumphant too."<sup>168</sup> Morales, honored by the same "sacred laurel" that established the careers of Rossini and Bellini, can bring his accomplishment back to Mexico, and make his country triumphant, too. Thus, Morales's connection to Italy and Italian composers not only strengthens his own reputation as an opera composer, but also the prestige of the newly independent (again) Mexico in Europe.

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<sup>166</sup> "Revista teatral," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 21 October 1869.

<sup>167</sup> "Seguir la religion musical de mis padres." *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 21 October 1869.

<sup>168</sup> "Tu entonces atrevido, de lauro sagrado que á Rossi y Bellini coronan la sien, un ramo frondoso del tronco arrancado trajiste á tu patria, triunfante tambien." Luis G. Ortiz, "Al Distinguido Compositor Mexicano: Melesio Morales," *El Renacimiento*, 29 May 1869.

The choices Morales made in composing and constructing *Ildegonda* emphasize the extent to which he looked to Italian opera as a model for crafting his style of Mexican opera. His association with Italy and Italian composers was made even more explicit after his premiere, reflecting Mexico's quest for political, financial, and artistic legitimacy in the eyes of Europe. The success of Morales's *Ildegonda* demonstrated Mexico's potential as a new member of the European sphere. What if Mexican composers, instead, decided to incorporate Mexico's own history and cultures into artistic expressions, such as opera—would that make Mexico less “European?”

### ***Guatimotzín* as Italian Opera: Mexico's International Image?**

Aniceto Ortega's *Guatimotzín* presents a very different picture of the future of Mexican opera and of Mexico's path to artistic and political legitimacy. Whereas Morales looked to Italian models and styles for nearly every aspect of *Ildegonda*, Ortega made a concerted effort to incorporate both Mexican history and music into *Guatimotzín*, which suggests that it is possible to succeed in the operatic (and possibly in the political) world while acknowledging and even embracing the ways in which Mexico differs from its European counterparts. Ortega and José Cuellar retold the story of the last Aztec emperor's capture and imprisonment by Hernán Cortés in a newly-written libretto in Spanish, rather than setting an established Italian libretto on a European topic. As in *Ildegonda*, a mixture of operatic forms appears in *Guatimotzín*—the *cantabile-cabaletta* of the “Aria de Cuauhtémoc” described in chapter two and the strophic “Aria de Cortés.” In this chapter, the “Aria de Cortés” illustrates how Ortega applied Italian models to his operatic compositional style in *Guatimotzín*.

The most distinctive elements of *Guatimotzín*, however, are those that represent Mexico's folk cultures, which helped to make this work a national musical symbol like the "Marcha Zaragoza." The "Marcha y Danza Tlaxcalteca," depicting the indigenous allies of Cortés, includes folk melodies, such as "El Perico," and motives derived from folk tunes throughout. Reviews in Mexican newspapers emphasized the unique character of the "Marcha y Danza" and praised Ortega's innovative approach to opera. If Mexican composers could successfully incorporate their own heritage into musical works, why couldn't politicians and intellectuals do the same in crafting Mexico's image and reputation in Europe? The overall emphasis in *Guatimotzín* on Mexico's history and cultural attributes suggested a necessary reevaluation of what constituted "civilization" and "taste," one that involved reconfiguring ideas about how Mexico fit into the larger world sphere of influence, one that took into consideration pride for Mexico's mixed racial and cultural heritage, rather than feeling shame for its differences from Europe.

The libretto and musical form of the "Aria de Cortés" exemplify how Ortega drew from both established Italian opera literary and compositional constructions of melodic and harmonic structures. In the "Aria de Cortés," Ortega's text conforms to patterns of prosody and rhyme, especially in the strophic sections. The varied strophic aria also has a regular lyric form, including phrase structure, text-setting, and harmonic progression.

In the bass aria for Hernán Cortés, "Aria de Cortes," the conquistador expresses joy in the victory over the Aztecs and thanks his fellow Spaniards and their Tlaxcaltecan allies for their bravery in battle. The recitative, addressed to the Tlaxcaltecan warriors, is mostly in the Spanish *heptasílabo* (seven-syllables/line) meter. In Table 2-5 the "a" stands for "agudo," which means that the last syllable of the line is accented, and therefore counts as two



syllables (like *tronco*).

**TABLE 2-5: “Aria de Cortés,” *recitative* text**

<b>Recitative text</b>	<b>Syll No.</b>	<b>Translation</b>
Guerreros tlaxcaltecas	7	<i>Tlaxcaltecan warriors</i>
Que acaban de vencer (a)	7a	<i>Who just won</i>
A las huestes aztecas,	7	<i>Against the Aztec armies,</i>
Gozad de nuestro triunfo.	7	<i>Enjoy our triumph.</i>
Podéis ya descansar.	7a	<i>You can rest already.</i>

The seven-syllable lines are similar to the *versi sciolti* of Italian opera recitatives, which are usually combinations of seven and eleven-syllable lines. The sparse orchestral accompaniment in F major leads from predominant chords to the dominant, setting up the tonic (F major) of the orchestral prelude to the main section of the aria. The vocal lines mostly consist of declamatory rhythms with increased emphasis on the last lines of text, “Gozad de nuestro triunfo/ Podéis ya descansar.” This text is repeated at the end of the recitative in a descending line that emphasizes the dominant function of the recitative as a whole, again standard in Italian opera recitatives.

After the recitative, a brief orchestral interlude develops the first motive in the aria, a descending triad. The voice enters with the first A section, in which all of the melodic and textual material is stated. Then, in the A’ part of the varied strophic aria, the first vocal statement is abbreviated (in this case, to one stanza of text), and then expanded through ornamentation.<sup>169</sup> The two stanzas of four-line each are in seisílabo (six syllables per line) and follow an *abbc-dbbc* rhyme scheme. Both stanzas are stated in A, and in A’ only the first stanza appears with added embellishments, as well as a codetta, both of which serve to make

<sup>169</sup> See for example “Cielo e mar” (La Gioconda, Ponchielli, 1876); Budden, “Aria: 19<sup>th</sup> century,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315> (accessed 14 August 2010).

it as long as the first *A* section.<sup>170</sup>

**TABLE 2-6: “Aria de Cortés,” aria text**

Aria text	Syll No.	Translation
Guerreros valientes, Campeones osados, Habéis mostrado Valor en la lid.	6 6 6 6a	<i>Valiant warriors, Bold champions, You have shown Bravery in battle.</i>
(Mas) Ya en la Victoria De honor ambiciosos Seréis generosos Como hijos del Cid. <sup>171</sup>	6 6 6 7a	<i>(What’s more) Already in the victory Of ambitious honor You are generous Like sons of the Cid.</i>

The lyric form of the “Aria de Cortes” is also regular, though with shorter two-measure or one-measure units, instead of the prototypical four-measure phrase units (Figure 2-7). The first stanza of text, eight measures long, breaks into four smaller two-measure phrase units, with the form *a-b-a’-c* (the same as in the examples from *Ildegonda*), each of which is accompanied by a I-V<sup>7</sup> progression, except the fourth which serves to close the phrase with a V<sup>7</sup>-I progression, as expected in conventional lyric form.<sup>172</sup>

The second stanza, also eight measures long, is condensed into single-measure units with repeated text, “seréis generosos como hijos del Cid,” filling out the last four measures. The harmonies in this section tonicize the dominant (C major), and create two pairs of

<sup>170</sup> This is common in varied strophic arias, where the second *A* section is initially abbreviated, but expanded through embellishment and a coda or codetta to the same length as the first *A* section (Budden, “Aria: 19<sup>th</sup> century,” *Grove Music Online*).

<sup>171</sup> This line refers to the Medieval Spanish hero and Christian warrior Rodrigo de Vivar (d. 1099) who fought in the “Reconquista” against the Moors. For more on El Cid, see David Nicolle, *El Cid and the Reconquista* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 1988; reprinted 2004), 3–4.

<sup>172</sup> Steven Huebner, “Lyric Form in *Ottocento* Opera,” *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 117, no. 1 (1992): 123.

antecedent-consequent phrases that include the repeated text.<sup>173</sup> The first two-measures of each pair end on a V/V or vii°/V, while the second two measures close with the temporary tonic, C major.<sup>174</sup> The C major then sets up the return of F major at the start of the restatement of *A*.

**FIGURE 2-7: “Aria de Cortés,” form in A section**

The musical score consists of six staves of music in bass clef, 3/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The lyrics are written below the notes. Harmonic annotations include Roman numerals (I, V7, ii6, I6/4, V, V7/V, V6, I) and labels for antecedent and consequent phrases. Measure numbers 3, 6, 9, 12, and 15 are indicated at the start of their respective staves. The lyrics are: "Gue - rre - ros va - lien - tes cam - peo - nes o - sa - dos, Ha - béis ya mos - tra - do va - lor en la lid. Mas ya en la vic - to - ria de hon - or am - bi - cio - sos se - réis ge - ne - ro - sos co - mohi jos del Cid se - réis ge - ne - ro - sos se - réis ge - ne - ro - sos como hi - jos del Cid." The score ends with a double bar line.

The *A'* section begins with a full statement of the first stanza of text as in the first *A*, with the same orchestral accompaniment and harmonic progression. After these first eight

<sup>173</sup> Antecedent-consequent pairs are common in lyric form constructions, as Steven Huebner explains in his article, “Lyric Form in *Ottocento* Opera,” 124–125.

<sup>174</sup> Aniceto Ortega del Villar, “Aria de Cortés,” in “Cuautemotzín,” score, ca. 1871, Special Collections, Conservatorio Nacional de Música de México, 79–80.

measures, the phrase “Habéis ya mostrado valor en la lid” is repeated for another eight measures, as the vocal line develops the final motive of the previous section in two-measure units, which focus on the half-step neighbor tone and the descending triplets. The harmonic progressions in this expansion, as in the second stanza, create two pairs of antecedent-consequent phrases. The first two measures of each phrase prepare the dominant (C major), and the second two measures end with an incarnation of  $V^7-I$  in the tonic key (F major).<sup>175</sup> This is followed by a brief five-measure codetta on the text “valor en la lid,” which emphasizes the V-I progression in F major by closing with an ascending line to F4 for the bass, Cortés, as the orchestra takes over the triplet motive.

**FIGURE 2-8: “Aria de Cortés,” form in A’ section**

The musical score for the "Aria de Cortés" in the A' section is presented in three systems. The top system shows the vocal line in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. It features three phrases labeled 'a', 'b', and 'a'' with lyrics: "Va-lien - tes Gue - rre - ros cam - peo - nes o - sa - dos Ha - béis - ya \_\_\_ mos". The middle system shows the bass line starting at measure 6, with lyrics: "trado va - lor \_\_\_ en la lid. Habéis yamos - tra - do valor en la lid. Habéis yamos - tra - do valor en la". It includes harmonic annotations: I, V7, I antecedent, V7, and I consequent. The bottom system shows the bass line starting at measure 12, with lyrics: "lid. Habéis ya mos - tra - do valor en la lid. Ha béis yamos - tra - do valor en la lid. va - lor en la". It includes harmonic annotations: ii6, V7 antecedent, I, IV6 conseq., vii7/V, I<sup>6</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, and V7. The final system shows the bass line starting at measure 18, with lyrics: "lid. va - lor en la lid. \_\_\_". It includes harmonic annotations: I, V<sup>6</sup>/<sub>5</sub>/IV, IV6, vii7/V, I<sup>6</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, V7, I, and V7.

The consistent prosody, as well as formal and harmonic structure of the “Aria de Cortés” demonstrates how Ortega incorporated aspects of established Italian operas into

<sup>175</sup> Ortega del Villar, “Aria de Cortés,” 80–82.

*Guatimotzín*, not only in the large-scale *cantabile-cabaletta* aria and duet of Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa, but throughout the work in very detailed constructions of melody and harmony. These arias and duets in the Italian style also served to accentuate musical elements that diverged from typical Italian opera melodies, forms, and influences.

The “Marcha y Danza Tlaxcalteca,” the celebration of victory by the Tlaxcaltecan warriors, however, uses preexisting melodies from Mexican folk songs and reflects Mexican folk songs in its rhythms and melodies throughout. For example, scholars such as Malena Kuss and Gerónimo Baqueiro Foster identified Ortega’s use of the folk song “El Perico” (The Parakeet) and the *tzotzopizahuac* rhythm in the “Marcha y Danza” (March and Dance). Other motives in the piece also reflect possible folk sources, such as the songs “El Guajito” and “El Cojo.” Mexican critics praised the incorporation of Mexican folk and indigenous musical elements, and noted the musical connection between the “Marcha y Danza” and the indigenous people (Tlaxcaltecs) being represented on stage. The folk and indigenous aspects of the music, as well as the critics’ perception of them, helped to create an image of Mexico’s past and future that included Mexico’s own cultures in the face of European dominance.

The “Marcha y Danza Tlaxcalteca” consists of a series of repeated motives played primarily by the strings and woodwinds in an *aa’bb’cc’dd’ee’* form with cadential material based on *c* at the end. Each repetition of the motive is slightly different than the first statement, whether it adds embellishments or abbreviates the original melody. A chorus of soldiers enters with the *e* motive praising Cortés, and continues until the end of the piece. Like many operatic marches, the “March y Danza” is stylized, but unlike examples from Verdi’s *Nabucco* and *I Lombardi* the straight march rhythms are replaced by folk tune

syncopations and Mexican *sones*.<sup>176</sup>

The first motive, *a*, is played in F major by strings alternating with the clarinets and oboes.<sup>177</sup> It consists of violins and cellos playing dotted rhythms outlining a major third, followed by descending triplets played by the winds. Its contour and alternating of uneven rhythms and triplets is very similar to “El Guajito” [The Fool], a *son* noted as a national air as early as the 1840s, and included by Julio Ituarte in his *Ecos de México: Aires Nacionales*, published around 1880.<sup>178</sup> Thus, it was likely a well-known *son* at the time Ortega composed the “Marcha y Danza Tlaxcalteca.” The characteristic quarter-eighth rhythmic pattern of the *mestizo son* is referenced throughout the “Marcha y Danza.”<sup>179</sup> Its inclusion in the dance therefore points to Mexican *mestizo* popular culture, not existing melodies or tropes of Italian opera.

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<sup>176</sup> David R.B. Kimbell, *Verdi in the Age of Italian Romanticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 326–329.

<sup>177</sup> Aniceto Ortega del Villar, “Marcha y Danza Tlaxcalteca,” in “Cuautemotzín,” score, ca. 1871, Special Collections, Conservatorio Nacional de Música de México, 83.

<sup>178</sup> Enrique Florescano, *El Patrimonio Nacional de México, II* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997), 107; Michael S. Werner, *Concise Encyclopedia of Mexico* (Oxford: Taylor and Francis, 2001), 532.

<sup>179</sup> For more on the son, see the article by Gerard Béhague, et al., “Mexico,” in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/18539> (accessed 15 August 2010).

**FIGURE 2-9a: “Marcha y Danza Tlaxcalteca,” motive *a***

The musical score for Figure 2-9a consists of six staves. The first three staves are for Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, and Violin. The last three staves are for Ob., Bb Cl., and Vln. The music is in 2/4 time and features triplet markings (3) over groups of notes. The Oboe and Clarinet parts have a key signature of one flat (Bb), while the Violin part has a key signature of one sharp (F#).

**FIGURE 2-9b: “El Guajito” (The Fool)<sup>180</sup>**

The musical score for Figure 2-9b is a vocal line in 6/8 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are in Spanish and are written below the notes. The score consists of two lines of music.

Gua ji - to a mi que, me-dio que trai-a ya lo gas - té Gua ji -  
 to a mi no, ya no te com-pro tu chi - cha rron.

After an abbreviated restatement of the *a* theme, the violins, flutes, and clarinets enter with the *b* theme in C major, still with uneven rhythms, now within a new melodic contour.<sup>181</sup> The ascending lines in this section resemble those of “El Espinado,” while the descending lines are similar to those in “El Cojo.” The first, “El Espinado” [The Pricked One], is a *jarabe*, a type of *son*, and was one of the most popular dances in Oaxaca, Puebla,

<sup>180</sup> “El Guajito,” *Al Pueblo Mexicano: Coleccion de Treinta Jarabes, Sones Principales y mas populares Aires Nacionales de la Republica Mexicana*, compiled and edited by Miguel Rios Toledano (Mexico City: H. Nagel, ca. 1900), 5.

<sup>181</sup> Ortega del Villar, “Marcha y Danza Tlaxcalteca,” 85–86.

Tlaxcala, and Mexico City beginning in the period of French occupation.<sup>182</sup> “El Cojo” [The Lame One], also a *son*, also contains the typical triple rhythm.

**FIGURE 2-10a: “Marcha y Danza Tlaxcalteca,” motive *b***



**FIGURE 2-10b: “El Espinado” [The Pricked One]<sup>183</sup>**

Se - ño-res el Es - pi - na - do, Na - die lo sa - be bai - lar. \_\_\_\_

5  
Pues pa - rae - soes ne - ce - sa - rio, A su cha - ti - ta mir - ar. \_\_\_\_

**FIGURE 2-10c: “El Cojo” [The Lame One]<sup>184</sup>**

Soy co - jo deun pié, \_\_\_\_ y no pue do/an - dar, \_\_\_\_

5  
Soy co - jo deun pié, \_\_\_\_ Y no pue - do/an - dar \_\_\_\_

The ascending and descending scales in theme *c* provide variations on the *tzotzopizahuac* rhythm, first identified by Mexican critic Alfredo Bablot in 1871. The *tzotzopizahuac* pattern, as described by Bablot and later by Mexican scholar Gerónimo Baqueiro Foster, characterizes a national dance from the Sierra Huasteca (Northeastern

<sup>182</sup> Vicente T. Mendoza and Virginia R. R. de Mendoza, eds., *Estudio y Clasificación de la Música Tradicional Hispánica de Nuevo México*, vol. 5 (Mexico City: UNAM, 1986), 536.

<sup>183</sup> “El Espinado,” *Al Pueblo Mexicano*, 15.

<sup>184</sup> “El Cojo,” *Al Pueblo Mexicano*, 21.



Mexico).<sup>185</sup> It consists of triplet eighth-notes followed by duple eighth-notes. In this section, the violins, flutes, clarinets, and oboes play crossing ascending and descending lines with the *tzotzopizahuac* rhythm.<sup>186</sup>

**FIGURE 2-11: “Marcha y Danza Tlaxcalteca,” motive *c* (*tzotzopizahuac*)**

The musical score for Figure 2-11 consists of four staves: Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in B $\flat$ , and Violin I. The music is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. Each staff features a melodic line with triplet eighth notes and duple eighth notes. The Flute, Oboe, and Violin I parts have a key signature of one flat (B-flat major), while the Clarinet in B $\flat$  part has a key signature of two sharps (D major). The score is divided into six measures, with a final measure ending with a double bar line.

In the next section, in B-flat major, the *son* “El Perico” [The Parakeet] is featured with interludes of arpeggios possibly from the *son veracruzano* (*son* from Veracruz, also known as a *son jarocho*) “El Curripití.”<sup>187</sup> Both “El Perico” and “El Curripití” were documented as early as the 1800s in Mexico.<sup>188</sup> The violins and B-flat clarinets play the melody, while the rest of the instruments play an accented chordal accompaniment. This

<sup>185</sup> Alfredo Bablot, “Crónica Musical: Beneficio del Maestro Moderati,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 25 September 1871; Gerónimo Baqueiro Foster, *Historia de la Música en México III: La Música en el Periodo Independiente* (Mexico City: Secretaria de Educación Pública, INBA, 1964), 227–228.

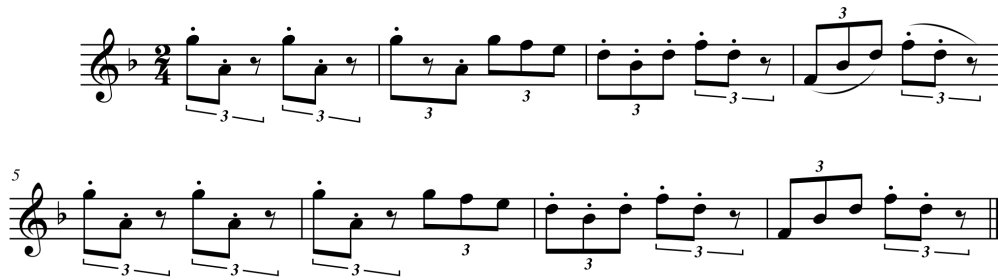
<sup>186</sup> Ortega del Villar, “Marcha y Danza Tlaxcalteca,” 87-89.

<sup>187</sup> José Alejandro Huidobro Goya, *Los Fandangos y Los Sones: La Experiencia del Son Jarocho*, MA thesis, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Unidad Iztapalapa, 1995, 90.

<sup>188</sup> Daniel E. Sheehy, “Mexico,” *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Volume 2: South America, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean*, ed. Dale A. Olsen (New York: Routledge Publishers, 1998), 606.; Rubén M. Campos, *El Folklore y la Música Mexicana: Investigación acerca de la Cultura Musical en México (1525–1925)* (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1991), 168.

eight-measure theme appears two times in full and the third in an abbreviated version. The first statement has sparse accompaniment in the strings, while the second and third iterations include the entire orchestra (strings, woodwinds, brass, and drums) with a countermelody played by a solo violin.<sup>189</sup> Figure 3-12 illustrates the theme in the “Marcha y Danza,” as well as the relevant parts of “El Perico” and “El Curripití.”

**FIGURE 2-12a: “Marcha y Danza Tlaxcalteca,” motive *d***



**FIGURE 2-12b: “El Perico” [The Parakeet]<sup>190</sup>**



**FIGURE 2-12c: “El Curripití”<sup>191</sup>**



In the final thematic section, Ortega again uses the quarter-eighth rhythm associated with the *son*. This F-major motive begins with the minor-third leap from “El Guajito,” but then continues with newly-composed material that, in the second statement, gradually moves higher to the high F (top of the staff) of the cadential section. The choir (unspecified voice

<sup>189</sup> Ortega del Villar, “Marcha y Danza Tlaxcalteca,” 90–92.

<sup>190</sup> “El Perico,” *Al Pueblo Mexicano*, 26–27.

<sup>191</sup> “El Curripití,” *Al Pueblo Mexicano*, 18–19.



the established Mexico City opera repertoire.<sup>194</sup>

## Conclusion

In late nineteenth-century Mexico scholars debated how Mexico could prove its political, economic, and cultural legitimacy to the rest of the world, particularly Europe. The arts, including opera, became a vehicle to express the extent to which Mexico had become “civilized,” or consistent with European tastes and ideals. In the opera scene, Melesio Morales’s *Ildegonda* and Aniceto Ortega’s *Guatimotzín* illustrated contrasting approaches to establishing a Mexican opera style, which connected to the differing perceptions of Mexico’s “civilized” future: should Mexico copy European styles and concepts as closely as possible, or should aspects of Mexico’s own unique history and cultural traditions be incorporated into this new image? In *Ildegonda* Morales used an Italian libretto set in Italy, by a librettist associated with Verdi, and adhered closely to established textual and musical forms and structures. Ortega chose to create a new libretto in Spanish about an important indigenous figure in Mexican history, Cuauhtémoc, and used both Italian forms and lyric structures, while also including indigenous and folk elements in the rhythmic and melodic components of *Guatimotzín*.

But why were *Ildegonda* and *Guatimotzín* so different? The two operas developed under very different circumstances by composers with divergent musical educations and goals. Morales was already a seasoned opera composer when he wrote *Ildegonda*, and was familiar with the politics of the Mexico City opera scene. After the difficulties he

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<sup>194</sup> It is important to note that there was still no established Mexican Italian opera company, which meant that most Mexican operas and their composers needed the support and backing of Italian opera singers and impresarios in order to even obtain a premiere.

encountered in premiering *Romeo y Julieta*, he probably wanted to make sure the Italian opera companies would agree to perform *Ildegonda*. Ortega was a medical doctor who wrote music as a hobby. He was asked to compose *Guatimotzín* by the most famous Italian singer in Mexico (Tamberlick), which almost guaranteed him a premiere in Mexico City. And, Tamberlick's request that Ortega write about Mexican history gave Ortega much more freedom in choosing a story, as well as musical styles. Among the most important differences, however, were the probable goals of each man in composing *Ildegonda* and *Guatimotzín*. Morales sought to create a worldwide reputation for himself in Italian opera composition, and *Ildegonda* was not only an expression of his compositional talent, but also a vehicle to catapult his fame in Italy and elsewhere in Europe. Ortega was a well-known surgeon, and had become famous in Mexico for writing patriotic music. While *Guatimotzín* was an important addition to this legacy, it was not a necessity for his profession or his hobby. He could therefore take more risks in incorporating material of which the audience and/or critics might not approve. Though both Morales and Ortega relied on Italian models of opera composition, the ways in which they applied them (or did not apply them) depicted divergent paths towards establishing a place for themselves and for Mexico in the political spheres within their country and abroad.

### CHAPTER 3

#### PERFORMING MESTIZAJE: RACIAL IDENTITY IN THE OPERA SCENE

“I hoped to lead [the opera], always respecting historical truth, through the incidents that marked the capture of Cuauhtémoc, and arrive at the outcome, making the Mexican martyr go through the terrible and evil torture that the conquistadors imposed on him.”<sup>195</sup>

Aniceto Ortega, “Crónica Musical,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 25 September 1871.

In an interview with famed Mexican journalist Enrique Chavarri, Aniceto Ortega described the plot of his new “musical episode” or opera, *Guatimotzín* (another name for Cuauhtémoc). The opera told the story of the last Aztec emperor, Cuauhtémoc, and his defeat by the Spanish in 1521. After his capture, Cuauhtémoc endured years of torture at the hands of Cortés and his men, which would eventually come to symbolize Mexican resilience under foreign rule. Ortega’s opera reflected a popular view of Cuauhtémoc as a victim of “terrible and evil” Spaniards’ abuse, and also demonstrated prevalent conceptions of racial difference in mestizaje in late nineteenth-century Mexico.

*Guatimotzín* premiered during a period in Mexican history when racial relations and attempts to categorize Mexican society and culture along ethnic lines were particularly complex. While politicians wanted to avoid new European occupations of Mexico (France

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<sup>195</sup> “Yo esperaba conducirla, respetando siempre la verdad histórica, al través de los incidents todos que marcaron la captura de Cuautemoc, y llegar al desenlace haciendo marchar al mártir mexicano al terrible é inícuo suplicio que le impusieron los conquistadores.” Aniceto Ortega, “Crónica Musical,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 25 September 1871.

had occupied Mexico from 1864 to 1867), they still looked to European models and strategies to solidify their nation and prove international legitimacy. In this context, scholars and politicians developed and perpetuated the ideologies of mestizaje as a means of “civilizing” the Mexican population. Although mestizaje originally referred to racial-mixing, in the late nineteenth century it became a nation-building ideology whose goal was to transform Mexicans physically, mentally, and culturally into Europeans. Its supporters expressed admiration for the light skin color, cultural tastes, “civilized” behavior, and “racial progress” of European societies. These concepts play an important role in interpreting Ortega’s *Guatimotzín* in its historical and cultural context. By analyzing various components of the opera and its reception as performances of mestizaje, one can gain insight into the inherent contradictions and ambiguities within individuals’ definitions of mestizaje.

*Guatimotzín* is a useful tool in considering the significance of mestizaje in late nineteenth-century Mexican society because its depiction of an encounter between the Aztecs and the Spanish provides a venue for performances of various iterations of racial difference and of past as well as contemporary perspectives of indigenous Mexicans. The libretto by Mexican writer José Tomás de Cuellar and Aniceto Ortega constitutes a performance of “Cuauhtémoc-as-*mestizo*,” illustrating efforts to re-position both Cuauhtémoc and Mexican history within the European sphere of influence. The musical styles of Cuauhtémoc’s aria and his duet with his wife, the Princesa, represent Mexican opera-as-European opera, due to the European influences in the musical forms and treatment of voices. The reviews of Enrico Tamberlick’s portrayal of Cuauhtémoc and Angela Peralta’s characterization of the Princesa constitute a kind of performance of the critics’ ambivalent stances towards aspects of mestizaje. Critics’ reactions also indicate the importance of balancing symbols of indigenous

authenticity with elements from “civilized” European operatic culture in *Guatimotzín*.

This chapter examines *Guatimotzín* in order to address a series of problems and questions concerning ambivalent notions of and relationships between ethnic and racial identities in late nineteenth-century Mexico. The colonial subject of the opera illuminates differences between past conceptions of indigenous Mexicans and their position in Mexican society during this period. Centuries of racial and cultural mixture made it difficult to differentiate between ethnic groups, particularly the indigenous in comparison to Europeans, based on physical appearance and cultural practices. Changes in conceptions of racial mixture, combined with the prevalent view of the indigenous as “degraded,” and in need of European “civilization,” had a direct effect on the operatic scene. Politicians and scholars saw opera as a representative of the “civilized” tastes and values of Europe, and believed it capable of exerting a positive influence on Mexican society. This view becomes problematic in light of Ortega’s Mexican opera, which is set in colonial Mexico, includes “civilized” indigenous characters, and employs Mexican folk melodies. By studying both the characterizations of the indigenous characters and reviews of the opera, we can see how performers and critics negotiated these iterations of mestizaje within *Guatimotzín*.

### **Race and Difference: Mestizaje and the Mestizo**

In order to explore the racial identities within and surrounding *Guatimotzín*, it is important to understand the prevalent conceptions of racial difference in late nineteenth-century Mexico, particularly those concerning mestizaje and the mestizo. These beliefs provide insight into the popularity of the opera and the complexities inherent in the production and reception of an indigenous-themed opera. For example, as a symbol of high-



class and refined tastes, influenced by Europe, many believed that imported operas exercised a “civilizing” influence on a “backwards” Mexican society.<sup>196</sup> But, if the indigenous need to be “educated” and influenced in order to rectify their “backwards” state, what kind of effect would an opera with positive portrayals of indigenous characters have on its spectators?

The history of the “mestizo” dates back to colonial New Spain, where it designated those who traced descent from both Indians and Spaniards. Though the indigenous peoples had their own social structures characterized by a tributary system and inherited nobility, Spanish colonizers began to dismantle such Indian authority and ranks (including those of the military and priesthood) as early as 1521. The nobility survived by continuing to marry within their own ranks and by intermarrying with the Spanish conquistadors.<sup>197</sup> For example, Cortés’ Aztec lover, Malinche, is considered the “mother of the mestizo nation.”<sup>198</sup> Such miscegenation<sup>199</sup>, or *mestizaje*, is the key to understanding the colonization of Mexico that began in 1521—many consider the conquest of Mexico to be more based upon biological mixture, rather than military battles.<sup>200</sup> The caste system imposed upon these complicated variants of racial mixture was intended to sustain the authority of the Spanish immigrants, or

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<sup>196</sup> Ignacio Altamirano, “La Ristori,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 6 January 1875; 9 January 1875.

<sup>197</sup> Natividad Gutiérrez, *Nationalist Myths and Ethnic Identities: Indigenous Intellectuals and the Mexican State* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 165.

<sup>198</sup> Gutiérrez, *Nationalist Myths*, 149–50.

<sup>199</sup> Miscegenation is a common translation of “*mestizaje*,” and has very different connotations in Latin America than in the United States. For a discussion of “*mestizaje*” as miscegenation, see Kelley R. Swarthout, *Assimilating the Primitive: Parallel Dialogues on Racial Miscegenation in Revolutionary Mexico*, Latin America: Interdisciplinary Studies 8 (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004), 27–29.

<sup>200</sup> Robert Padden, *The Hummingbird and the Hawk: Conquest and Sovereignty in the Valley of Mexico, 1513–1541* (New York: Harper Books, 1976), 220.

*peninsulares*. This structure was tied to the Spanish conception of the “nation,” which they determined through racial purity, a “community of blood” and linguistic cohesion.<sup>201</sup>

Continued racial mixture and perception of racial difference in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries was dependent on the waves of European immigration to colonial New Spain and the rising Mexican elites. From the end of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, Mexico’s colonization process was enhanced by the arrival of an increasing number of European women. These women, who emigrated mainly from Spain, played a vital role in maintaining core Spanish values, such as “purity of the blood” in Mexican society. European-born women signified high social status, and thereby aided the process of differentiation between *peninsulares* (born in Spain) and *criollos* (Spaniards born in the New World), as well as *mestizos*. Due to continued racial mixture, it became increasingly difficult to distinguish between Europeans and *mestizos*. Therefore, such distinctions began to be based more on perceived cultural practices than solely on skin color. Beliefs and social structures associated with the caste system continued to have a significant impact on Mexican society until well into the nineteenth century.

After Mexico’s independence from Spain in 1821, European immigration decreased, due to the nation’s political instability, growing internal debt and lack of investment, and demographic pressures on land.<sup>202</sup> And, the Europeans who did immigrate were usually young, single males, who formed insulated expatriate communities who had as little contact as possible with the less “white” Mexican population. Most Europeans selected mates from their home country, members of the same social class, religious denomination, and

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<sup>201</sup> Gutiérrez, *Nationalist Myths*, 151.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

profession.<sup>203</sup> These phenomena resulted in a cultural divide, a perceived dichotomy between “foreigner” and “Mexican.”

At the same time, conceptions of race and racial difference, though still rooted in the colonial past, were heavily influenced by the egalitarian ideology of liberalism. This philosophy allowed for the “dissolution of the castes into a ‘mestizo race’ as the classification of racial combinations, which was then conflated into an inclusive ‘bipolar’ model encompassing only Indian and white.”<sup>204</sup> *Mestizos* began to carve a place for themselves in the Mexican social hierarchy, and class and cultural distinctions began to replace previous racial categories. In the absence of the strict system of racial differentiation, *criollos* asserted authority as representatives of the Spanish, Roman Catholic nation on Mexican soil. In this view, all those outside of Spanish culture (“Indians,” foreigners, and those of mixed race) were considered outsiders.<sup>205</sup>

Amid the turbulence of post-independence Mexico, a new literary and artistic movement arose, which tried to rationalize the problematic heterogeneity of Mexican society. Writers such as José María Lafragua (1813–1875) and Guillermo Prieto (1818–1897) championed the vernacular customs and types in their descriptions of a complete yet faceted Mexican culture.<sup>206</sup> Benito Juárez, Mexico’s first indigenous president (1858–1864), further developed this pro-indigenous social memory during *La Reforma*, in which he sought to

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<sup>203</sup> Jürgen Buchenau, “Small Numbers, Great Impact: Mexico and Its Immigrants,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 20, no. 3 (2001): 28.

<sup>204</sup> Claudio Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth: Culture and Ideology in the Mexican National Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 276.

<sup>205</sup> Buchenau, “Small Numbers,” 29.

<sup>206</sup> Erica Segre, *Intersected Identities: Strategies of Visualisation in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Mexican Culture* (New York: Berghan Books, 2007), 7–15.

destroy the remaining colonial institutions.<sup>207</sup> His policies also involved the erasure of local ethnicities and the destruction of their basis in communal property and local political institutions.<sup>208</sup> Despite efforts to unite Mexicans as citizens in the Liberal sense, Mexico remained what European race theorists such as Gobineau called a “hybrid society.” Its continuing political, economic, and social issues served as evidence for European social theorists of the inherent “degeneracy” of such populations.<sup>209</sup>

From the end of the second Mexican Empire in 1867 until the fall of the Porfiriato, varying conceptions of mestizaje emphasized the differing goals of the political regimes of Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz, and those among writers and critics, such as Ignacio Altamirano and Justo Sierra. During his presidential terms from 1867 until his death in 1872, Benito Juárez sought to form a Mexican nationality composed of a citizenry (defined by common birth in a homeland) that had “a truer equality of access to state protection and representation...but the proletarianized masses continued to be principally dark-skinned and under the economic yoke of foreigners.”<sup>210</sup> Juárez’s generation of liberals sought to redeem the Indians by giving them access to the goods of citizenship: education, universal rights, and

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<sup>207</sup> He remained president-in-exile during the French occupation, and resumed his position as president in 1867, after the fall of the French.

<sup>208</sup> Ana Maria Alonso, “Territorializing the Nation and “Integrating the Indian”: Mestizaje in Mexican Official Discourses and Public Culture,” *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants and States in the Postcolonial World*, ed. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 41.

<sup>209</sup> Ana María Alonso, “Conforming Disconformity: ‘Mestizaje,’ Hybridity, and the Aesthetics of Mexican Nationalism,” *Cultural Anthropology* (2004): 461. For more on how Gobineau’s theories of racial mixture influenced French music, see Jann Pasler, “Theorizing Race in Nineteenth-Century France: Music as Emblem of Identity,” *The Musical Quarterly* 89, no. 4 (2006): 459–504.

<sup>210</sup> Claudio Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 51.

equality.

Despite the egalitarian rhetoric of Juárez's liberalism, the ideal of whiteness did not disappear in nineteenth-century society.<sup>211</sup> The focus on the "mestizo" did not detract from the idea that whiteness was still the only position where wealth and high status remained stable. Thus, the complex racial castes of the colonial period were simplified into a bipolar model of Indian/White with the middle "class" of *mestizos*.<sup>212</sup> In the Liberal doctrine of Juárez, Indians were viewed as backward and inferior, and Mexican Liberals sought to "civilize" Indians through education based on the European model.<sup>213</sup>

This privileging of whiteness and European liberalism had direct connections to Mexican opera culture during this period. Operas and opera companies, as representatives of an exclusive European expressive culture, were seen as symbols of elevated social position. Thus, opera performers, composers and audiences also enjoyed high social status in Mexican society. Mexican operas by composers such as Cenobio Paniagua were rarely performed, and if they did receive a premiere, did not survive in the opera repertoire for very long. This hierarchy within the opera scene was cemented by the common idea that European operas and opera companies that traveled and performed in Mexico City provided a positive social model and (European) cultural education for Mexican audiences.

Politicians and social theorists believed it especially important to "educate" Mexican populations in the ways of the West. In a 24 November 1871 article in *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, Mexican congressional representative Julio Zárate wrote an article about the mistreatment of

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<sup>211</sup> Lomnitz-Adler, *Exits from the Labyrinth*, 275.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 276

<sup>213</sup> Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico*, 51.

his country's indigenous populations, especially on haciendas. He compared their situation to slavery, and advocated for their moral, intellectual, and material freedom. For Zárate, the only way to achieve this was through education and their assimilation into "civilization." He stated that, with education of the indigenous, there would be no more terrible punishments or debts that hindered the liberty of previous generations. Instead, there would be "individuals of a great nation who know their rights and their duties, who possess this noble sentiment of human dignity." Zárate presented the education of the indigenous as a way to free them from their current state of servitude, rather than from a "degraded" cultural or mental state. Explanations of education's importance changed considerably during the Porfiriato.

Perceptions of racial difference became more pronounced during the reign of Porfirio Díaz, who conceived of the ideal Mexican nation as modeled after Europe, particularly France, in cultural tastes, fashion, economic strength, and even skin color.<sup>214</sup> Díaz and his administration could not strictly adhere to European theories about race because darker-skinned indigenous and mixed-race groups formed the majority of their population. Therefore *científicos*, technocratic advisers to Díaz, reinvented mestizaje as a constructive phenomenon for Mexican society.<sup>215</sup> This logic of Porfirian "development," combined with colonial racial ideologies, resulted in an official (justified by elite intellectuals) and unofficial (practices by the social elites) climate of racism.<sup>216</sup> For many, Juárez's successes provided proof that Indians were capable of "ascending" to the Europeans' cultural level if given the

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<sup>214</sup> Ignacio Altamirano, "Crónica de la Semana," *El Renacimiento*, 3 July 1869.

<sup>215</sup> Swarthout, *Assimilating the Primitive*, 64.

<sup>216</sup> Alan Knight, "Racism Revolution, and *Indigenismo*: Mexico, 1910–1940," in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870–1940*, ed. Richard Graham and Thomas Skidmore (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1990), 80.

opportunity and resources. Efforts to improve these “inferior” types were supported by politicians, writers and scholars of this period, such as Justo Sierra, Ignacio Altamirano, Pimentel and García Cubas. Such writings served to cement the relationship between race and intelligence, especially in the field of anthropology, which was marked by increasing Eurocentrism.

Works by accomplished scholars, such as Antonio García Cubas’s *The Republic of Mexico in 1876* reinforced this conception of the indigenous Mexican as “uncivilized.” Though this work was not published until well after the production of *Guatimotzín*, both Angela Peralta and Enrico Tamberlick, according to Aniceto Ortega, consulted García Cubas while preparing for their roles as Aztec leaders in *Guatimotzín*.<sup>217</sup> In *The Republic of Mexico in 1876* García Cubas placed the “indigenous race” in opposition to people of white and mixed racial backgrounds.<sup>218</sup> Among indigenous traits, he included “cunning, obstinacy, and an inclination for spiritual drinks.” But, the so-called “degradation” was not due to their nature, but rather because of their practices and customs, which could be reformed.<sup>219</sup> According to García Cubas, the “Indian race” would continue to decline in number, unless “civilization” could convert them into a more favorable (more European) character.<sup>220</sup> And in Mexican culture the white race and elite mestizos represented the purveyors of this “civilization.”

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<sup>217</sup> Proteo, “Crónica Musical: Beneficio del Maestro Moderatti,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 25 September 1871.

<sup>218</sup> Antonio García Cubas, *The Republic of Mexico in 1876: a Political and Ethnographical Division of the Population, Character, Habits, Costumes, and Vocations of its Inhabitants*, trans. George F. Henderson (Mexico City: La Enseñanza, 1876), 61–62.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 62–63.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

Francisco Pimentel provided a similar characterization of indigenous Mexicans in his 1864 study, *Memoria sobre las causas que han originado la situación actual de la raza indígena de México y medios de remediarla* [Memory of the Original Causes of the Situation of the Indigenous Race in Mexico and Ways to Repair It].<sup>221</sup> Pimentel outlined similar ideas about the “backwardness” of Indian customs, but also examined their mental and psychological state. He believed that their serious, taciturn, and melancholy character played a significant role in maintaining their difficult position.<sup>222</sup> Pimentel also addressed their physical constitution, consisting of a “narrow forehead, black eyes...dense hair, black, thick and smooth, little beard...His skin is olive-colored...The disagreeableness of their color, narrowness of their forehead...that are just a medium between ugliness and beauty.”<sup>223</sup> Despite the obvious bias in this description, Pimentel then made an interesting observation—Mexico was actually comprised of two nations, the indigenous and the white, each with a unique position with regard to power, class, wealth, and relationship to science and European fashion.<sup>224</sup>

How could indigenous Mexicans become part of this “white” world? For Pimentel, the first step was to make them forget their own customs and language, and to then teach

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<sup>221</sup> Francisco Pimentel (Conde de Heras), *Memoria sobre las causas que han originado la situación actual de la raza indígena de México y medios de remediarla*, *Dos Obras de Francisco Pimentel*, (Mexico City: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, Cien de México, 1995), 1–152.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 131–132.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 131–132.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.



them about the Spanish language and Christianity.<sup>225</sup> This was especially important for the mestizo population who as Mexican historian Lucas Alamán stated in his *History of Mexico*, were “susceptible to all the good (of the whites) and all the bad (of the Indians).” According to Pimentel, the mestizos were “ahead of the Indian in progress,” but still possessed defects that required remedy.<sup>226</sup> Pimentel and García Cubas represented many who believed that the best way for Mexico to strengthen its standing among countries in Europe and the United States was to encourage racial mixing and European immigration.

Debates about the disposition of Indians continued well into the 1880s, when scholars still considered formal education in European ideas of citizenship, language, and culture as a means to “civilization.” In February and March of 1883, a debate in the Mexico City newspaper *La Libertad* about Indian education between Francisco G. Cosmes, Justo Sierra, and Ignacio Altamirano illustrated the range of views concerning the aptitude of indigenous populations.<sup>227</sup> The debate was brought to a head in 1883 by the proposal of a constitutional amendment that would provide free, mandatory primary education for all.<sup>228</sup>

Conservative journalist Francisco Cosmes considered Indians “impervious to all civilization,” and the only educational effort worth making in native communities was to impart to the children practical ideas about agriculture.<sup>229</sup> He believed that Indians were

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 175.

<sup>227</sup> T.G. Powell, “Mexican Intellectuals and the Indian Question, 1876–1911,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 48, no. 1 (1968): 19–36.

<sup>228</sup> *La Libertad*, 16 February 1883.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

probably incapable of overcoming their condition of “degradation.”<sup>230</sup> Sierra disagreed and explained that this education was necessary for “the transformation of the indigenous class into a progressive class.” Such instruction would not only help Mexico to resist the strong social pressures from the United States, but also liberate the Indian from “a life of superstition and drunkenness.”<sup>231</sup> Altamirano, an educated Indian and famous writer, agreed with Sierra insofar as all indigenous groups were “susceptible of receiving the benefits of instruction.”<sup>232</sup> Despite their differences, Cosmes, Sierra, and Altamirano all considered education a necessary step in the process of helping Mexico’s people as a whole “ascend” to Europe’s cultural and political status. European artistic forms, such as opera, could play an important role in “educating” the Mexican people.

The opera scene during the Porfiriato reflected ideologies about the role of race and ethnicity in determining social structures in a myriad of ways. Performances of imported operas by opera troupes from Italy, Spain, and France were seen as a way to “civilize” the Mexican masses. The idea was flawed because opera spectators were mainly wealthy and/or politically-connected Europeans and *mestizos*, who already considered themselves “civilized.” Opera audiences viewed these foreign productions as symbols of their own progressive modernity.<sup>233</sup> Opera, therefore, only reached a small segment of the Mexican population, and these patrons were already “civilized.” The second, related flaw to the implementation of mestizaje through opera concerns cultural influence. The European opera

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<sup>230</sup> *La Libertad*, 1 March 1883.

<sup>231</sup> *La Libertad*, 27 February 1883.

<sup>232</sup> *La Libertad*, 3 March 1883.

<sup>233</sup> Anita Gonzalez-El Hilali, “Performing Mestizaje: Official Culture and Identity in Veracruz, Mexico,” PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1997, 52.

companies that came to Mexico rarely stayed for more than their performance season of a few weeks to a few months. This schedule made it difficult for them to make a lasting impression on the “masses.” Though opera in reality played a small role in furthering the ideology of mestizaje throughout Mexican society, it did act to reinforce this ideal among its performers and audiences. Furthermore, the construction of Cuauhtémoc in *Guatimotzín* illustrates the conflicts that resulted from efforts to deepen the resonance of mestizaje by applying it to Mexican history.

Attempts to build a closer relationship between Mexican indigenous cultures and European tastes and ideals are important to understanding the opera *Guatimotzín*. As an opera that presents a positive portrayal of the Aztecs, *Guatimotzín* poses a problem for the depictions of indigenous peoples found in the works of García Cubas, Pimentel, and others. The idealization of Mexican history in a European genre seems to reinterpret Mexico’s history as less barbaric than represented in chronicles, such as that of Bernal Díaz del Castillo. This source is particularly important because Aniceto Ortega (and José Cuellar) based the libretto for *Guatimotzín* on Díaz’s descriptions of Cuauhtémoc and Cortés.<sup>234</sup>

A brief overview of Cuauhtémoc’s biography is necessary in order to understand the scope of the inconsistencies in Díaz’s accounts of the last Aztec emperor, and how Ortega and Cuellar interpreted them in *Guatimotzín*. Cuauhtémoc was the son of Ahuítzol, the eighth emperor of Mexico, and his wife Tlilalcáptel, a daughter of the Lord of Texcoco. He married the daughter of Moctezuma II. In 1520, as Cortés and his allies marched on the Aztec capital Tenochtitlán, Cuauhtémoc was elected emperor of the Aztec empire. He mounted a defense that lasted well into 1521, when Cortés launched a four-month siege that resulted in the fall

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<sup>234</sup> Proteo, “Crónica Musical,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 25 September 1871.

of the Aztec capital and the capture of Cuauhtémoc by the Spanish. At first, Cortés treated Cuauhtémoc with deference, and took him with him on subsequent expeditions. Cortés and other Spaniards began to suspect that Cuauhtémoc was hiding the bulk of the wealth he had accumulated as emperor. They tortured him for a long while, and in 1525, Cortés named Cuauhtémoc as a conspirator in a plot against Spanish forces, and ordered him executed. Cuauhtémoc's defense of indigenous Mexico and his bravery in the face of torture became legendary in Mexican history.<sup>235</sup> Díaz, as a witness to many of these events, offered his interpretation of Cuauhtémoc's character in *The True History of the Conquest of New Spain*.<sup>236</sup>

Spanish soldier Bernal Díaz, whose chronicles Ortega relied upon, provides a conflicting picture of the last Aztec monarch as both respectable and barbaric. According to Díaz, the Aztec emperor was “a young man of about twenty-five, very much of a gentleman, for an Indian, and very valiant.”<sup>237</sup> After Cuauhtémoc's surrender, Díaz described him in more detail: “Guatemoc was very delicate, both in body and features. His face was long but cheerful, and when his eyes dwelt on you they seemed more grave than gentle, and did not waver. He was twenty-six, and his complexion was rather lighter than the brown of most Indians. They said he was a nephew of Montezuma, the son of one of his sisters; and he was married to one of Montezuma's daughters, a young and beautiful woman.”<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Christopher Fulton, “Cuauhtémoc Awakened,” *Estudios de historia moderna y contemporánea de México*, no. 35 (2008): 6.

<sup>236</sup> Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The Conquest of New Spain*, translated with an introduction by J.M. Cohen (New York: Penguin Books, 1999).

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 405.

These two descriptions focus on Cuauhtémoc's role as a warrior, "valiant" and unwavering, as well as his paleness in comparison to his fellow Indians. Díaz's praise is later tempered by the Aztec emperor's "barbaric" treatment of captive Spanish soldiers. "Guatemoc did something more after his victory. He sent the hands and feet of our soldiers, and the skin of their faces, and the heads of the horses that had been killed, to all the towns of our allies and their relations..."<sup>239</sup> While he is brave and steadfast, as well as light-skinned, Cuauhtémoc cannot escape the brutality to which he is predisposed as he adheres to indigenous customs. Both aspects of his character helped to make him a legend in Mexican history and a central figure in the discourse of indigenous identity in nineteenth-century Mexico.

As scholars and government officials debated the status and future of the indigenous peoples of Mexico in the 1870s and 1880s, there was a resurgence of interest in the pre-colonial encounter between Cortes and indigenous populations in Mexico. It resulted in new historical descriptions and artistic depictions of the last indigenous emperor, the Aztec king Cuauhtémoc. For example, a memorial to Cuauhtémoc was unveiled on 13 August 1869, the anniversary of the fall of Tenochtitlán. This memorial included a small bust and granite base dedicated by Benito Juárez. Inscriptions on the base in Spanish and Nahuatl stated, "To the last Aztec monarch, Cuauhtémoc, heroic in the defense of the nation, sublime in martyrdom."<sup>240</sup> In addition, Liberal politicians and intellectuals like José María Luis Mora and Ignacio Altamirano saw Cuauhtémoc as a guardian and defender of a free and independent Mexico. Historians including Ignacio Ramírez, Vicente Riva Palacio, and

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 387.

<sup>240</sup> Fulton, "Cuauhtémoc Awakened," 13.

Fernando Orozco y Berra employed the figure of the Aztec emperor as a reminder of Mexican potency in the wake of foreign interventions in their published histories of Mexico.<sup>241</sup>

Many Liberal scholars and officials saw this Aztec emperor as a symbol of the strength of free Mexico, but others who sought to further “civilize” the Indian populations looked to Cortés as the first emissary of European culture in Mexico. Conservatives who sought to “civilize” Mexico by emulating European beliefs and customs, focused on the influence of Cortés and the conquistadors in Mexico. For example, Lucas Alamán and Joaquín García Icazabalceta praised Cortés for bringing Christianity and “civilization” to Mexico, and deemed Cuauhtémoc a confused defender of Indian idolatry.<sup>242</sup> This increasing use of Cuauhtémoc as a symbol for (or obstacle to) the building of a new independent “Western” Mexico may help to explain the portrayal of Cuauhtémoc as a quasi-European *mestizo* in *Guatimotzín*.

### **Guatimotzín: The Origin and Context of the Premiere**

Aniceto Ortega began to compose *Guatimotzín* in 1871, at the request of famed Italian tenor Enrico Tamberlick, who was performing in Mexico as a member of Italian impresario Enrico Moderatti’s opera troupe.<sup>243</sup> Tamberlick wanted to sing something written by Ortega, and was an admirer of Mexican culture, which he had come to know through his

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<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>243</sup> Mexico City newspapers used a variety of spellings of Moderatti’s name. I use the Italian spelling, “Moderatti,” unless the specific source provides a different spelling.

friend and fellow singer, Mexican soprano Angela Peralta.<sup>244</sup> At a party in June of 1872, Tamberlick stated, “When I had the pleasure of meeting Angela Peralta in Europe, I fell in love with Mexico because I saw in her the type of talent and the noble sentiments that distinguish the Mexican people...”<sup>245</sup> The use of the phrase “noble sentiments” here could imply an association with the “noble savage,” but because of the context in Italian opera, Tamberlick is most likely referring to her grace and modesty as an opera star. Tamberlick and Peralta starred in the 13 September 1871 premiere of *Guatimotzín* at a concert organized by opera impresario Enrico Moderatti.<sup>246</sup>

Aniceto Ortega was born in 1825 to statesman Francisco Ortega, and received his education through medical school in Mexico. Though he enjoyed a distinguished career in medicine, he was also very involved in the Mexico City music scene. He was a founding member of the Sociedad Filarmónica Mexicana in 1866, and in 1867 composed the “Marcha Zaragoza,” a nationalistic piece dedicated to the General who helped defeat the French at Puebla on 5 May 1862.<sup>247</sup> *Guatimotzín* was his only operatic work, and was supposedly written during his downtime between patients. He enlisted the help of Mexican poet and scholar José Tomás de Cuellar in writing the libretto, but when Cuellar became ill, Ortega had to step in and write portions (it is unclear which) of the libretto for *Guatimotzín*. This

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<sup>244</sup> Proteo, “Crónica Musical,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 25 September 1871.

<sup>245</sup> Enrique Olavarría y Ferrari, *Reseña Histórica del Teatro en México*, vol. 2 (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1961), 830.

<sup>246</sup> Benefit concerts were common stipulations in performing/directing contracts beginning in the eighteenth century. They would occur at the end of a season, and the proceeds would go directly to the singer or director (minus overhead costs).

<sup>247</sup> Robert Stevenson, “Ortega del Villar, Aniceto,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/20503> (accessed 19 October 2009).

work is recognized as one of the first Mexican operas based on an indigenous subject, and is considered the first Mexican nationalist opera.<sup>248</sup> This makes its inclusion in the benefit concert of an Italian impresario surprising, especially alongside works by established European operatic composers.

The program for the benefit concert included many other works, all by European composers. It included the following: 1) Sinfonia and third act from Enrico Moderatti's opera *Il Cavaliere di Marillac*; 2) the *Oberon* overture by Carl Maria von Weber<sup>249</sup>; 3) Act I from Friedrich Flotow's opera *Marta*; 4) Act 2 from Friedrich Flotow's opera *Marta*; 5) Overture of *La Caza* from Etienne Mehul's opera *El Joven Enrique*; and, 6) *Guatimotzín*. The program demonstrates the wide range of works performed in Mexico City's operatic scene, as well as the array of musical and cultural influences found in late-nineteenth century Mexico. It brought together excerpts from *Il Cavaliere di Marillac*, an Italian opera by Moderatti, *Oberon*, a Classical German opera by Carl Maria von Weber, *Martha*, a German romantic-comic opera by Friedrich Flotow, *El Joven Enrique*, a Spanish arrangement of a French comic opera (*Le jeune Henri*) by the composer Etienne-Nicolas Méhul, and *Guatimotzín*, a Mexican opera about an indigenous hero. As a whole, the program illustrates diversity, but clearly features the Mexican opera *Guatimotzín*, which could serve to unite these disparate influences by focusing on a shared Mexican history. Both the anchoring position of *Guatimotzín* in the program, as well as the inclusion of the entire work, as opposed to excerpts, emphasize its importance in relation to the other works performed that

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<sup>248</sup> Malena Kuss, "The 'Invention' of America: Encounter Settings on the Latin American Lyric Stage," *Revista de Musicología*, vol. 16, no. 1 (1993): 198–201.

<sup>249</sup> Though the newspaper printed "Meber," I have found no record of such a composer, and am therefore postulating that it is, in fact, the overture from Carl Maria von Weber's 1826 opera *Oberon*.



evening.

Ortega's opera in nine scenes, *Guatimotzín* (1871), demonstrated his continued interest in writing works that connected specifically with Mexican audiences. Ortega and Mexican writer José Tomás de Cuellar wrote the libretto in Spanish, and based the plot on the final Aztec emperor's defense of Mexico against the Spanish conquistadors. The main characters consist of Cuauhtémoc, his wife the Princesa, and Hernán Cortés. It begins with an orchestral overture, which is followed by the chorus of soldiers. The chorus of Spanish soldiers complains that their captains have not shared the gold, silver, and jewels, equally among the company.<sup>250</sup> The music of the soldiers is characterized by a march-like rhythmic pattern emphasized by the constant beat of a drum.

The third scene features Cuauhtémoc's aria, in which the captive Cuauhtémoc laments that he has lost his honor and is now imprisoned by the Spanish. In the *recitative* (*tempo di mezzo*) and the subsequent "enthusiastic and patriotic" *cabaletta* he hallucinates that he defeats the Spanish and saves his empire.<sup>251</sup> This leads into the fourth scene, a duet between Cuauhtémoc and his wife, the Princesa. The Aztec emperor again recalls the humiliations he has suffered, while his wife tries to console him with her love; for a moment, they forget their sad situation.<sup>252</sup>

The fifth scene, a march, depicts the triumphal entry of the conquistadors into the plaza of Coyoacán. Critics noted similarities between this march and Ortega's *March*

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<sup>250</sup> Aniceto Ortega, "Argumento del episodio musical 'Cuauhtémoc'," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 11 September 1871.

<sup>251</sup> Otto Mayer-Serra, *Panorama de la Música Mexicana Desde la Independencia Hasta la Actualidad* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1941), 141.

<sup>252</sup> Ortega, "Argumento del episodio musical," 11 September 1871.

*Zaragoza* because of its patriotic significance. Cortés's aria then follows in the sixth scene, which depicts his arrogance and "Spanish pride."<sup>253</sup> Then, the Tlaxcaltecs, indigenous allies of the Spanish, perform a march and dance. Perhaps the most famous piece from the opera, critics praised its incorporation of indigenous musical elements, in the form of the *tzotzpizahuac* dance rhythm of the Huasteca, a region in the northeast of Mexico. Many also noted its similarity to the first movement of Beethoven's Symphony no. 7.<sup>254</sup>

In the "Duo of the Daggers," the eighth scene, Cuauhtémoc and his wife are brought before Cortés and the other conquistador officials. Cuauhtémoc's wife offers to give her life in exchange for the survival of her husband, thereby emphasizing her love for him. Cuauhtémoc then steals the dagger from Cortés's belt because he "prefers death to dishonor." And, in the ninth scene an ensemble including Cuauhtémoc, the Princesa, Cortés, and the chorus of soldiers sing about the cruelty of grief.<sup>255</sup>

Announcements and advertisements for the program for Moderatti's benefit concert, including *Guatimotzín*, began to appear in Mexico City newspapers on 9 September 1871. Due to the high price of opera tickets in general, it is safe to assume that these ads were intended to attract those who had attended the preceding opera season and who were already familiar with the impresario, his company, and the other works on the benefit program. Though they appeared in different newspapers, the announcements focus on the historical accuracy and Mexican connections of the new production, *Guatimotzín*. The 9 September announcement in *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* praises the scenery designer, Fontana, for his

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<sup>253</sup> Mayer-Serra, *Panorama de la Música Mexicana*, 141–142.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 142–144.

<sup>255</sup> Mayer-Serra, *Panorama de la Música Mexicana*, 145; Kuss, "The 'Invention' of America," 198.

accuracy in depicting the clothes of ancient Mexicans, and for his use of “local decorations” in the opera.

In the 13 September advertisement in *El Monitor Republicano*, the impresario Moderatti provides the entire benefit program with brief descriptions of each musical excerpt. Rather than criticize the use of indigenous “decorations” in the European opera genre, the announcements express admiration for the Mexican aspects of the performance. For *Guatimotzín* Moderatti adds, “a musical episode about the history of the conquest of Mexico, composed by A. Ortega. The scenery for the second scene was painted especially for this performance by Sr. Fontana, with historical authenticity.”<sup>256</sup> Here, *Guatimotzín* is associated with Mexico twice, once in the reference to the plot, the conquest of Mexico, and a second time in the mention of “historical authenticity.”

Announcements and advertisements were not the only material about *Guatimotzín* printed in Mexico City newspapers. On 11 September 1871, both *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* and *El Monitor Republicano* printed excerpts from the libretto for *Guatimotzín*, provided by Aniceto Ortega.<sup>257</sup> The selections included descriptions of the main characters, introductions to each scene, and some descriptions of the music that marked the beginnings and ends of scenes. Because the only surviving score of *Guatimotzín* contains none of these instructions, this is the text I analyze as the “libretto” in the following case study.

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<sup>256</sup> Though the announcement in *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* is not signed, the ad in *El Monitor Republicano* is signed, “Señor Moderati.”

<sup>257</sup> According to an interview in the 25 September, 1871 issue of *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, famous writer José Cuellar was supposed to write the libretto, but became sick, so Aniceto Ortega was forced to write the libretto and the music for *Guatimotzín*.

### **The Libretto: Performing “Indigenous-as-Mestizo”**

The libretto of *Cuauhtémoc* is performative in that it reenacts the ambiguities and contradictions within prevalent conceptions of indigenous Mexicans, and of *Cuauhtémoc*, in late nineteenth-century Mexico by repositioning both the Aztec leader and Mexican history within the European sphere. For example, the libretto is a performance of the indigenous *Cuauhtémoc-as-mestizo*, which problematizes the idea that education is necessary to “civilize” the indigenous in Mexico. As a portrayal of *Cuauhtémoc* “ascended,” it serves to reify the idealized form of the *mestizo*. In addition, by couching Mexican indigenous history in terms of Western history, that is, ancient Greece, the libretto is also a performance of Mexican history-as-European history. The libretto points to possible contradictions in *mestizaje* through its comparison of *Cuauhtémoc*’s personal qualities to those of Cortés’s in their duet. The piece featuring *Cuauhtémoc* and Cortés becomes a performance of indigenous as more “civilized” than the European, which challenges the superiority of the European and makes a statement about social positioning within the political ideology of *mestizaje*.

Using Carol Smith’s idea of social positioning in *mestizaje*, the introduction to the libretto of *Guatimotzín* is a performance of *Cuauhtémoc* as a heroic, honorable, and unselfish man. His “heroic” character is further emphasized in the way Ortega changes the story of *Cuauhtémoc*’s death. In the context of prevalent conceptions of indigenous Mexicans as “degraded,” this performance both serves as a possible example of *Cuauhtémoc* “ascended,” and as a reinforcement of the idealized norm of *mestizo*.

The libretto excerpts printed in the 11 September 1871 issues of Mexico City newspapers *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* and *El Monitor Republicano* represented the composer’s own performance of the “civilized” *Cuauhtémoc*. Ortega explained that his *Cuauhtémoc* has

“an intelligent and agreeable face, [is] valiant and dignified in battle... careful as the most thoughtful gentleman... especially with the princess, his wife.”<sup>258</sup> This description did not include a discussion of his “degraded” nature as an indigenous figure, which contrasted from the characterizations of Mexican “Indians” in this period by Mexican scholars such as Antonio García Cubas.<sup>259</sup> Instead, it displayed ways in which Cuauhtémoc conformed to ideal gentlemanly behavior through bravery and thoughtfulness. This remark was not qualified by “Indian” or “Mexican,” and therefore positioned Cuauhtémoc in relation to gentlemen including those of Europe and the United States. The Aztec ruler again found himself situated among the “civilized” societies abroad. Additional descriptions in the libretto characterized Cuauhtémoc in a similar manner. For example, Ortega referred to the Aztec leader as, “This noble character, deserving of better luck...”<sup>260</sup> Perhaps his “noble” character makes him deserve “better luck” than he had in fighting the Spanish. The word “noble” here, rather than emphasizing Cuauhtémoc’s conformity to stereotypes of the “noble savage,” served to accentuate his “civilized” qualities. Ortega and Cuellar also reinforced Cuauhtémoc’s characterization as noble, heroic, and thoughtful by deviating from historical accuracy in their retelling of Cuauhtémoc’s imprisonment.

In the plot of the opera, Ortega changed the events surrounding Cuauhtémoc’s death, emphasizing performance of Cuauhtémoc-as-“civilized” in *Guatimotzín*. According to chronicles of colonial history, Cuauhtémoc remained a Spanish prisoner for years after his

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<sup>258</sup> “De semblante inteligente y agradable, valiente y digno en batalla... Cuidadoso como el caballero mas cumplido... sobre todo con la princesa, su esposa.” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 11 September 1871.

<sup>259</sup> Antonio García y Cubas, *The Republic of Mexico*, 61–63.

<sup>260</sup> “Este noble carácter, digno de mejor suerte, se presta á mas de una epopeya de rasgos homéricos.” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 11 September 1871.

capture—Cortés did not have him executed until 1525. In the opera, however, shortly after capture Cuauhtémoc begs to be killed in order to avoid further disgrace and dishonor for himself and his people. As Malena Kuss states, this is evidence that Cuauhtémoc “thinks like a Western man.”<sup>261</sup> When combined with Ortega’s and Cuellar’s other descriptions of the Aztec emperor, the plot alteration further emphasized the ways in which *Guatimotzín* is a performance of Cuauhtémoc, not as an exemplar of “degraded” indigenous characteristics, but instead a figure who reifies the “civilized” mestizo.

The libretto not only reflected ideals of cultural influence on Cuauhtémoc, but on Mexico as a whole. Ortega’s comparison of Cuauhtémoc to the demigods of ancient Greece suggests that *Guatimotzín* is also a performance of Mexico history-as-European history in that the ancestors of Mexican history were similar to those of European history. Ortega states in the introduction to Cuauhtémoc’s place in Mexican history, “[Mexico’s] heroes, as time passes, seem more and more colossal, similar to the Titans, Hercules, and more demigods of Greek mythology.”<sup>262</sup> Placing Cuauhtémoc alongside heroes of Greek mythology had implications for the audience’s perception of Mexican history. Ancient Greece had long been considered the root of Western civilization in Europe, and this would have been common knowledge among highly-educated individuals in Mexico, such as Ortega (a doctor), and those who received their education in Europe (most of the opera audience). So, such a reference to mythic Greek figures would likely have been understood both by Ortega and the

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<sup>261</sup> Kuss, “The ‘Invention’ of America,” 198.

<sup>262</sup> “Sus heroes, á medida que pasa el tiempo, los vemos mas y mas colosales, semejantes á los Títanos, Hércules y demas semidioses de la mitología griega.” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 11 September 1871.

readership.<sup>263</sup>

The performances of mestizaje in the libretto do not always reaffirm the cultural ideal; they also demonstrate doubt about the perceived superiority of the European over the Mexican. The comparison of the social positions of Cuauhtémoc and Cortés within the political process of mestizaje in their duet paints the Aztec leader as honorable, and the Spanish conqueror as suspicious and devoid of compassion. In the context of prevalent values and conceptions of the “gentleman,” this implies that the indigenous representative may be more “civilized” than his European counterpart.<sup>264</sup> Ortega introduced the duet: “Cuauhtémoc begged Cortés to kill him, preferring this to the terrible disgrace and dishonor...after his defeat.”<sup>265</sup> The captured ruler prefers to retain his honor, and possibly that of his people, rather than face further captivity and the demise of his society at the hands of the Spanish. The text of the duet reinforced the honorable sentiment. Cuauhtémoc sings, “Take this iron, Hernando, and here in my chest it hurts. I do not want to live. I prefer death one thousand times to dishonor.”<sup>266</sup> Cuauhtémoc again expresses his desire to die, rather than endure more dishonor.

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<sup>263</sup> Literacy in Mexico City, and Mexico as a whole, was very limited; even after much improvement in literacy during the Porfiriato, only 50% of Mexico City residents could read in 1910, and only 20% of the Mexican population as a whole was literate by 1910 (Lee Stacy, *Mexico and the United States*, 752).

<sup>264</sup> Pablo Piccato, “Politics and the Technology of Honor: Dueling in Turn-of-the-Century Mexico,” *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 2 (1999): 331–333.

<sup>265</sup> “Cuauhtémoc rogó a Cortés que le quitara la vida, prefiriendo esto al terrible baldón y deshonor...después de su derrota.” Ortega, “Argumento del Episodio Musical,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 11 September 1871.

<sup>266</sup> “Toma este hierro, Hernando, y aquí en el pecho hiere a quien el pecho aquí. No quiero vivir. Prefiero deshonor mil veces, mil morir.” Aniceto Ortega del Villar, “Duo de los Puñales,” in “Cuautemotzín,” score, ca. 1871, Special Collections, Conservatorio Nacional de Música de México, 101–107.

In the duet, Cortés ignores Cuauhtémoc’s plea, and instead focuses on the fact that Cuauhtémoc remains his prisoner, and appears suspicious of his honorable request. “You are my prisoner. What are you trying to do Cuauhtémoc?”<sup>267</sup> Cortés demonstrates a lack of compassion and does not recognize his opponent’s honor and thus seems ungentlemanly.<sup>268</sup> Cuauhtémoc appears more “civilized” than Cortés, which makes this a performance of possible contradictions within the conception of social positioning and political discourses of mestizaje. If one “civilizes” Mexicans, they may surpass the European ideal, which would make the continued idealization of European culture problematic.

The libretto of *Guatimotzín* both reaffirmed and posed problems for the social and political processes inherent in mestizaje, thereby demonstrating ambivalence towards the ideology. By positioning both Cuauhtémoc and Mexican history as quasi-European, the libretto performed cultural work that confirmed Mexico’s place in the West. This performance of Cuauhtémoc as an idealized figure in mestizaje was further supported by the Italian influences in the musical and text forms in the aria and duet that feature Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa.

### **Musical Performances of Mestizaje: Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa**

While Ortega used popular Mexican tunes and rhythms to characterize indigenous characters elsewhere in *Guatimotzín*, the aria and duet for the Aztec rulers remain in forms and styles consistent with Italian *bel canto* and middle-period Verdi operas. The musical style and forms of the aria and duet of Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa constitute a performance

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<sup>267</sup> “Eres mi prisionero. Eres mi prisionero. ¿Qué intentas Cuautemoc?” Ortega del Villar, “Duo de los Puñales,” 101–107.

<sup>268</sup> Piccato, “Politics and the Technology of Honor,” 334–336.



of the Aztec couple as the “civilized” mestizo through their association with established European, and particularly “refined” Italian, opera.<sup>269</sup> By emphasizing the quasi-European aspects of these characters, the aria and duet reify the norm of the Mexican mestizo in mestizaje.

As demonstrated by Otto Mayer-Serra and Malena Kuss, the “March and Dance of the Tlaxcaltecs” incorporates popular Mexican melodies, rhythms, and styles such as the folk tune “El Perico,” the Huastecan *tzotzopizahuac* melody and rhythm, and an imitation of conjunto harp accompaniment.<sup>270</sup> The folk tune “El Perico” is a *jarabe*, a mestizo *son*, a folkloric genre intended for dancing that emerged around 1800. The *tzotzopizahuac* rhythm and melody is from the Huasteca people, an indigenous group in northeast Mexico.<sup>271</sup> These references to Mexican folk and indigenous music only characterize the Tlaxcaltecs, the Spaniards’ allies, and contrasts from the Italianate musical depiction of Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa.

Unlike the Dance of the Tlaxcaltecs, neither Cuauhtémoc’s aria nor his duet with the Princesa employs known folk or indigenous material, despite their focus on indigenous characters. The forms of the aria and duet rely on established operatic forms, such as that of the *da capo* aria and the *cantabile-cabaletta* form. Other possible areas of European influence include the interaction of voices in the duet and the dramatic use of formal sections.

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<sup>269</sup> Peter Standish and Steven M. Bell, *Culture and Customs of Mexico, Culture and Customs of Latin America and the Caribbean* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004), 174.

<sup>270</sup> Proteo, “Crónica Musical,” 25 September 1871; also, Mayer-Serra, *Panorama de la Música Mexicana*, 142–144; Malena Kuss, “The ‘Invention’ of America,” 198–201.

<sup>271</sup> Proteo, “Crónica Musical” 25 September 1871; Mayer-Serra, *Panorama de la Música Mexicana*, 142–143; Kuss, “The ‘Invention’ of America,” 198–200.

These Italian opera elements position Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa as “educated” and “civilized” mestizos.

In the “Aria of Cuauhtémoc” through the reliance on models from Italian opera the main character self-identifies as a culturally enlightened “civilized” Mexican. The form of Cuauhtémoc’s aria is a hybrid between the *cantabile-cabaletta* form used by nineteenth-century opera composers, such as Rossini and Verdi, and the ABA’ *da capo* aria, typically found in Baroque and Classical operas. In my analysis, I will draw from established conventions in Baroque and Classical opera, Italian opera of the *bel canto* style from the early nineteenth century, and from characteristics of Verdian operas before 1870. The *da capo* aria was the aria form used in Baroque opera and throughout the Classical period, in such operas as Mozart’s *Idomeneo* (1781).<sup>272</sup> It consisted of three parts, the A section, a contrasting B section, and a return to the A section, usually sung with added embellishments. In Cuauhtémoc’s aria we see repetition of material from the first section in the final part, which points to influence from the return to the *a* in *da capo* arias.

The *cantabile-cabaletta* form was the standard aria form in of the works of Gioacchino Rossini (1792–1868), Vincenzo Bellini (1801–35), Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848), and early Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)<sup>273</sup>, whose operas formed the core of the repertoire performed in Mexico City throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>274</sup> The *cantabile-cabaletta* form consists of a recitative (omitted in this aria), followed by a slow *cantabile*

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<sup>272</sup> Nicholas Temperley, “Aria,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315> (access 15 October 2009).

<sup>273</sup> It should be noted that, even by the middle period operas beginning in 1871, Verdi began to use forms more freely and more dependent upon characterization.

<sup>274</sup> Robert Stevenson, *Music in Mexico* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1952), 202.

melody, a mid-tempo *tempo di mezzo*, and a fast *cabaletta* portion meant to showcase the singer’s vocal agility. This form usually relies on Italian lyric verse forms, and in Ortega’s aria though the text is in Spanish, the prosody remains consistent in both the *cantabile* and *cabaletta*. In addition, both the tempo and the character of each part of Cuauhtémoc’s aria conforms to the *cantabile-cabaletta* form.

Cuauhtémoc’s aria, scene three, begins with an instrumental introduction in F major, in 4/4 time. It was called a “ritornello” in Mexican newspapers,<sup>275</sup> and begins with a chorale-like section (measure 1-18) that features the strings and clarinets. Such an orchestral introduction was typical in large-scale Rossinian arias, and they typically state the main thematic idea of the *cantabile*. Instead, Ortega bases the orchestral introduction on the main motive from the vocal line of the *cabaletta* (measures 18-42). This use of the aria’s vocal melody in the instrumental introduction was a common practice in operas by Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini in the early part of the nineteenth century.<sup>276</sup> As expected, it ends with a fully-articulated cadence in the tonic key, F major.<sup>277</sup>

**FIGURE 3-1: “Aria de Cuauhtémoc,”  
theme from orchestral introduction, mm. 59-60. (*cabaletta*)**



<sup>275</sup> Proteo, “Crónica Musical,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 25 September 1871.

<sup>276</sup> Jay Nicolaisen, *Italian Opera in Transition, 1871–1893* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1980), 51.

<sup>277</sup> Katherine T. Rohrer, “The Orchestra in Opera and Ballet,” *The Orchestra: a Collection of 23 Essays on its Origins and Transformations*, ed. Joan Peyser (New York: Hal Leonard, 2006), 341.

The G minor *cantabile* conforms to a regular prosody form and clear and even melodic and harmonic patterns. The prosody of the text for the *cantabile* section is regular—three stanzas of four lines each in heptasílabo (5 syllables per line) (see Table 3-1). Each of the first two stanzas of text forms an eight-bar phrase whose smaller units illustrate expected harmonic functions in lyric form (see Figure 3-2). For example, the two-measure units in the first phrase follow an *a-a'b-a* pattern, common in mid-nineteenth-century operas by Bellini (“Ah! Per sempre” *I Puritani*, 1835), Donizetti (“Io sentii tremar la mano” *Parisina*, 1833), and Verdi (“Come rugiada al cespite, *Ernani*, 1844).<sup>278</sup> The first two units, *a-a'*, are an antecedent-consequent pair (i-V7; V7-i), while the second pair of units, *b-a*, introduces a contrasting theme on a secondary dominant (V7/iv) which leads to the V7-i cadence that closes the *a* unit and the first thematic section. Then, accompanied only by the strings, the voice sings the second stanza of text on a new eight-measure motive in E-flat major that follows a similar harmonic progression to the first part. The third melody begins in B-flat major, but through a series of secondary dominants it modulates back to G minor. It consists of an eight-measure phrase with a two-measure extension that serves to emphasize the modulation to G minor. A brief connecting line in g minor leads to a short cadenza-like passage that modulates to C major. It was typical in *bel canto* arias to end the *cantabile* with a virtuosic run or cadenza.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> Julian Budden, “Aria: 19<sup>th</sup> century (i) Italy,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/43315> (accessed 2 September 2010).

<sup>279</sup> Emanuele Senici, *The Cambridge Companion to Rossini* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 114–117.

TABLE 3-1: “Aria de Cuauhtémoc,” *cantabile* text

Text	Syll No.	Translation
Cuanto sufrí	5-a	<i>How I suffered,</i>
Cuanto luché,	5-a	<i>How I fought,</i>
Todo á cielo	5	<i>All to heaven</i>
en vano fue	5-a	<i>Was in vain.</i>
Charca de sangre	5	<i>Full of blood</i>
La tierra ha sido	5	<i>The land has been</i>
Por todas partes	5	<i>Everywhere</i>
Mengua y baldón	5 -a	<i>A disgrace and dishonor.</i>
Todo el fruto	5	<i>All the fruit</i>
De mis desvelos	5	<i>Of my efforts</i>
Es la calma	4	<i>Is the calm</i>
De la prisión	5-a	<i>Of the prison.</i>

FIGURE 3.2: “Aria de Cuauhtémoc,” *cantabile* form

g minor: i V<sup>7</sup> V<sup>7</sup> i

5 V<sup>7</sup>/iv iv<sup>6</sup> ii<sup>6</sup> V<sup>7</sup> i

A *tempo di mezzo* section follows at measure 74, where the harmonies begin in C major. The key change reflects a new mood, as Cuauhtémoc contemplates what he would do if he had defeated Cortés and the conquistadors. The *tempo di mezzo* consists of three three-measure phrases, *a-b-a'*, that become chromatic over a series of secondary dominants, eventually modulating to E major. The tempo speeds up incrementally throughout this portion, transitioning to the fast tempo of the *cabaletta*.

An orchestral prelude to the *cabaletta*-like part occurs in measures 82-84, in C major and marked “allegro mosso” (more fast). This prelude leads to the “allegro” (fast) tempo

marking of the *cabaletta*, which heralds Cuauhtémoc's joy in uniting with his soldiers in heaven—he has decided to commit suicide. This third section of the “Aria of Cuauhtémoc” is a hybrid of the *cabaletta* in a *cantabile-cabaletta* form and the final A' portion of a *da capo* aria. It retains the character of a *cabaletta*, but is based on earlier material, which is typical of the final section of a *da capo* aria. Its fast march-like rhythm resembles the rhythmic drive of Verdian *cabalettas*, and the use of virtuosic vocal lines fits earlier incarnations of the *cabaletta*.<sup>280</sup>

It begins in measure 85, marked “Allegro,” and its main rhythmic pattern is taken from the “b” section of the *cantabile* (half note—dotted quarter—eighth—half note—quarter), though modified from 4/4 time to fit into the new time signature of 3/4 (see Figure 3-3).<sup>281</sup> The prosody of the *cabaletta* text is also similar to the *cantabile* in its five-syllable lines and clear rhyme schemes in each stanza (see Table 3-2). The first statement of the eight-measure-long melody, measures 85-92, consists of embellished statements of measures 59-60 (Figure 3-3) and 63-64 (Figure 3-4 and Figure 3-5) from the *cantabile*.<sup>282</sup> This phrase splits into four two-measure units, the first two prolonging tonic (C major), the third functioning as a predominant and the fourth prolonging the dominant (G major), which resolves to tonic at the beginning of the next phrase (see Figure 3-6).

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<sup>280</sup> Roger Parker, “Verdi, Giuseppe,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/29191pg4> (accessed 13 October 2009).

<sup>281</sup> Ortega del Villar, “Cuautemotzin,” 36.

<sup>282</sup> Ortega del Villar, “Cuautemotzin,” 36–37.

**TABLE 3-2: “Aria de Cuauhtémoc,” cabaletta text**

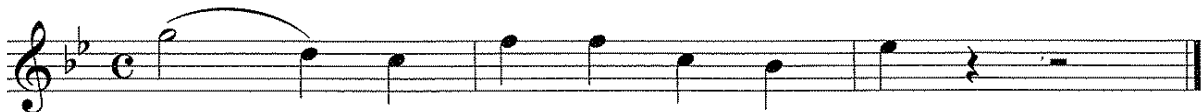
<b>Text</b>	<b>Syll No.</b>	<b>Translation</b>
Venga mi lanza, Abrete muro, Ruge de ira Mi corazón.	5 5 5 5-a	<i>Come my lance, Open wall, Roar in anger My heart.</i>
Uname el cielo Con mis valientes Y guay entonces Del Español.	5 5 5 5-a	<i>Unite me in Heaven With my soldiers And then brilliant Of the Spanish.</i>

**FIGURE 3-3: “Aria de Cuauhtémoc,” mm. 85-86**



y to- do el fru- to...

**FIGURE 3-4: “Aria de Cuauhtémoc,” mm. 63-64.**



es la cal - ma la cal - ma

**FIGURE 3-5: “Aria de Cuauhtémoc,” mm. 89-90.**



Ru- ge de i - ra

**FIGURE 3-6: “Aria de Cuauhtémoc,” *cabaletta* form**

**Allegro**

Ven - ga mi lan - za á - bre - te mu - ro

C major: I predominant I IV dominant I (tonic)

Ru - ge de i - ra mi co - ra - zón

v7 vi4-3 v7/V V (I)

The rest of the *cabaletta* consists of restatements of this main theme drawn from the *cantabile* with increasingly virtuosic variations and embellishments. Though this movement does not follow exactly the usual three-part form of a *cabaletta* (two statements of the same material separated by an orchestral interlude with more vocal display during the repeat), it retains the ideas of a repeated main theme and added ornamentation in the repeated material, also characteristic of the third section in a *da capo* aria. For example, in bars 104-108 Ortega employs modified versions of measures 61-62 and the cadenza from the *cantabile* (Figure 3-7).<sup>283</sup>

**FIGURE 3-7: “Aria de Cuauhtémoc,” mm. 104-108.**

y guay en- ton - ces del es - pa - ñol

The final sixteen measures of the vocal line are dominated by reiterations of the main rhythmic pattern borrowed from the *cantabile*, rising in pitch level until he reaches a high C

<sup>283</sup> Ortega del Villar, “Cuautemotzin,” 37–38.



“do de pecho” (chest-voice C) in the last phrase, which allowed Tamberlick to demonstrate his world-famous chest C.<sup>284</sup> The evidence of influence from Italian opera traditions from the *da capo* aria to *bel canto* and Verdian styles in Cuauhtémoc’s aria strengthens his performance as a quasi-European. This depiction of “civilized” Aztec characters continues in the duet between Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa.

### *The Duet of Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa*

The “Duo of Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa,” as a performance of racial and cultural identity, positions both figures as quasi-European through the influences in form and style from Italian *bel canto* operas. The form of the duet is *tempo d’attacco—cantabile—arioso—cabaletta*, a variation of the traditional Italian opera duet form common in mid-century works.<sup>285</sup> The *tempo d’attacco* refers to the recitative that begins the duet, while the *cantabile* is an extended slow, melodic section. In this duet, the *cantabile* grows increasingly virtuosic, and ends with a double cadenza, which was common in earlier nineteenth-century operas of Rossini. After each character was featured in the preceding *recitative* and *cantabile* sections, the faster dialogue at the end of the *cantabile* functions as a mini *tempo di mezzo*. Though the *tempo di mezzo* in the duet between Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa is much shorter than the standard, the movement itself was conventional in both Rossinian and Verdian operas.<sup>286</sup> The *cabaletta* that follows, the fastest portion, features the voices singing together, mostly in

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<sup>284</sup> Ortega del Villar, “Cuautemotzin,” 39–41.

<sup>285</sup> Nicolaisen, *Italian Opera in Transition*, 32–33.

<sup>286</sup> Nicolaisen, *Italian Opera in Transition*, 33; Scott L. Balthazar, “The forms of set pieces,” *The Cambridge Companion to Verdi*, ed. Scott Leslie Balthazar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 53.

thirds and sixths, a common ending to Italian opera duets with amorous texts in the nineteenth century.<sup>287</sup> The conformity of the duet between Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa to these established formal definitions supports their performance of a quasi-European mestizo identity.

The duet begins with a short introduction played by the strings in C major, 4/4 time. It includes two phrases featuring melodies in the violins, the first slow and punctuated by violins and violas, and the second constructed around sixteenth-note scales and accompanied by all of the strings. The opening vocal section of the Aztecs' love duet is a *tempo d'attacco* (mm. 12-34). It is characterized by short declamatory lines that alternate between Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa (see Figure 3-8).

**FIGURE 3-8: “Duo de Cuauhtémoc y la Princesa,” mm. 12-15.**

Princesa

Prin-ci-pe Ha! a- mo bien

Cuauhtemoc

Es- posa Es-po- sa mi- a

It establishes the different foci of the characters that are further explored in the *cantabile*—the Emperor sings about his pain and suffering as a prisoner, while his wife reassures him of her enduring love for him. In the second phrase, Cuauhtémoc expresses his escalating emotions through increasingly chromatic lines and louder orchestral accompaniment. This is typical for a Rossinian *tempo d'attacco*, which normally restates

<sup>287</sup> Michael Tilmouth, “Duet,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/08263> (accessed 13 October 2009).

conflicts already broached.<sup>288</sup>

After a brief instrumental interlude that modulates to A-flat major, the *cantabile* begins at measure 35. The *cantabile* (measures 35-52), marked “andante” (walking pace), primarily features the Princesa, who expresses her love for her husband. This unequal treatment of voices had precedence in Italian opera duets, such as “Di pescatore,” from Donizetti’s *Lucrezia Borgia*. The vocal line alternates between two lines of text and accompaniments. For example, the first phrase, “Te amo bien mio, te adoro con pasión” (I love you well, mine, I love you with passion), is sung twice to the same melody and accompaniment by low strings, clarinets, and bassoons. With the text, “tu dolor aumentará mi amor” (your pain will increase my love), a new higher-pitched motive enters, accompanied by all the strings. Then, when the first line of text (“Te amo bien...”) returns, she sings a variation of the first melody with the original accompaniment. But when the second phrase of text reappears, we find a new melody, beginning the quasi-*tempo di mezzo*.

In the *tempo di mezzo*-like portion (measures 52-63), the characters’ passion grows, and the vocal rhythms get faster. Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa alternate two-measure phrases over constant eighth-notes played by the strings and chords in the trumpets. This leads into a double cadenza in measure 63, which ends the quasi-*tempo di mezzo*. Though *cantabili* usually end with cadenzas in Rossini arias, the sudden change in character at measure 52 and the subsequent entrance of Cuauhtémoc point to a new subsection (see Figure 3-9).

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<sup>288</sup> Balthazar, “The forms of set pieces,” 53.

FIGURE 3-9: “Duo de Cuauhtémoc y la Princesa,” mm. 52-56.

Princesa

-lor au-men- ta- ra mi a- mor

Cuauhtémoc

y mi bal- don y mi bal-don

The intensity of the cadenza builds into the *cabaletta* (measures 65-104), in which Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa continue to profess their love for each other in virtuosic passages, mostly sung together on the same text and rhythms in harmonies of thirds and sixths, and ending in unison. The *cabaletta* has an overall a-b-a' form, split into eight-bar phrases for each line of text. The form and style of the *cabaletta* is most similar to those of Rossini, which featured a-b-a'-coda forms with the characters singing together in thirds and sixths throughout.<sup>289</sup> In the first part of Ortega's *cabaletta* (a), “moderato” in A-flat major, the Princesa sings florid passages over Cuauhtémoc's slower melodic line, accompanied only by the strings (measures 65-72). For the first repetition of this text (b), they modulate to E major, with a broader and slower-paced melody and harmony, punctuated by shorter notes in the strings, clarinets, bassoons, and trumpets (measures 73-80). For the added text, “tus caricias son delicias que enagenan la razón” (your caresses are delicious things that carry away rationality), the voices gradually sing higher in pitch, until the Princesa reaches A-flat<sup>5</sup> (81-88). This serves as a transition to the next repetition of the first phrase, a return to the first statement, the (a) portion (measures 89-96). Whereas in the first (a) the Princesa and Cuauhtémoc sang different motivic lines, here Cuauhtémoc joins the Princesa in singing fast embellishments. After reaching the high A-flat again, the Princesa begins the alternating

<sup>289</sup> Balthazar, “The forms of set pieces,” 54.

phrases of the codetta on beat two of measure 96. The unison cadenza on V then begins (measures 100-103), and leads to the final cadence in A-flat major.

The “Aria” and “Duo of Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa” are performances of their racial and cultural identity within the prevalent ideologies of mestizaje in late nineteenth-century Mexico. By acknowledging the social structure, these performances also reify the idealized “mestizo,” who has essentially assimilated into European society through her/his education, tastes, and values. The aural performance of the social positioning of these characters as European combined with historical accuracy in the visual representation of the Aztecs to produce somewhat conflicting identities. These contradictions resulted in particular discursive strategies in the critical reception that acknowledged the indigenous backgrounds of the characters, while also criticizing ways in which their appearance was inaccurate, thus allowing Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa, as well as the singers who portrayed them, to remain within the boundaries of European-influenced identity in mestizaje.

### **Reception as Identity: Critical Responses to *Guatimotzín***

The reception of Enrico Tamberlick’s and Angela Peralta’s portrayals of Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa are performances of the ambiguities and contradictions in critics’ conceptions of “mestizo” and mestizaje. These performative texts, as part of an ongoing interpretive process, provide a window into the sometime-conflicting definitions of *mestizo* and mestizaje operating in late nineteenth-century Mexico. This discursive compulsion to repeat norms of racial difference, and specifically those governing mestizaje, reaffirmed the normative and transgressive elements of the *Guatimotzín* performance. Praise for the accuracy of Tamberlick’s and Peralta’s visual representations of the Aztecs was tempered by

acknowledgements of mistakes in their costumes. In the case of Tamberlick's depiction of Cuauhtémoc, critics focused on the overly-dark makeup used to replicate his skin color.<sup>290</sup> Angela Peralta's portrayal of the Princesa provided a double performance, both through Peralta's life experience as a *mestiza* and as an embodiment of the ideal "civilized" Mexican in mestizaje through opera. The criticism served to reconstruct racial difference through a focus on indigenusness, and demonstrated both inclusivity and exclusivity inherent in mestizaje. The praise for her vocal execution reinforced the critics' conception of mestizaje as reliant on the European, and thereby positioned Peralta as an exemplar of a "civilized" *mestiza*.

Tamberlick's performance of Cuauhtémoc received rave reviews in Mexico City newspapers. In a costume he designed for the production, Tamberlick wore an Aztec headdress (*copilli*) made of gold, sandals with gold heels, a cotton cloak (*ayatl*) with Aztec hieroglyphs, a tunic with references to the god Tlaloc, and a hairstyle typical of Aztecs (black hair with medium-length bangs, falling to his shoulders).<sup>291</sup> Journalists such as Alfredo Bablot paid special attention to the perceptible contrasts between the characterization of Cuauhtémoc and that of Cortés, and in the review performed his own conflicted view of European preeminence in mestizaje. His interpretation of the characters supported their depiction in Ortega's libretto. Bablot particularly identified the nobility of the indigenous character and the arrogance of the Spanish leader. In the 25 September 1871 issue of *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, Alfredo Bablot, under the pseudonym of "Proteo" interviewed Aniceto Ortega about his new opera *Guatimotzín*, and offered his own opinion of various aspects of the

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<sup>290</sup> Tamberlick was already known in Italy for his portrayals of Otello in Gioacchino Rossini's opera *Otello*, a role that also incorporated the use of dark makeup.

<sup>291</sup> Proteo, "Cronica Musical," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 25 September 1871.

work. For example, he first characterized Cuauhtémoc's aria as "melancholy, sometimes taciturn, which is the root of the character of our indigenous peoples." This portrayal was consistent with Francisco Pimentel's description of "uneducated" indigenous Mexicans, and Bablot therefore seemed to contradict the conception of Cuauhtémoc as "civilized" expressed by Ortega in the libretto and by the musical style associated with him. This social positioning also corresponded to the prevalent ideas concerning racial difference within mestizaje, which considered indigenous peoples the most "degraded" and in need of "education."

Bablot, however, did not seem convinced of Cuauhtémoc's perceived inferiority as an indigenous man. In his comparison of the musical characterizations of Cuauhtémoc and Cortés, the Aztec leader emerges as the more "civilized," while Cortés' traits shed doubt on the supposed superiority of European values. Bablot stated, "Gautimotzín's recitative in the duet with Cortés is grandiose, energetic, full of nobility, of abnegation, of generosity, of heroism."<sup>292</sup> These "civilized" qualities seem incompatible with the Aztec emperor's "degraded" character traits. How is it possible that Cuauhtémoc can exhibit both sets of qualities? As a mestizo, he would be "susceptible" to the qualities associated with the indigenous, but also capable of displaying those admirable attributes of the Europeans and "educated" Mexicans. Bablot, through these reviews of Cuauhtémoc's music performs his conflicting views of Cuauhtémoc's character, and of his conception of what constitutes indigenous traits.

This positive description differed from his impression of Cortés as depicted in the music. Bablot stated, "The aria of Hernán Cortés is noble, vigorous and breathes the

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<sup>292</sup> "La escena del puñal es soberbia. El recitativo de Guatimotztín, grandiose, enérgico, lleno de nobleza, de abnegación, de generosidad, de heroismo," "Crónica Musical," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 25 September 1871.

arrogance of the victor that is the dominant sentiment of his race: Spanish pride.” Though Cortés displays some characteristics of a “civilized” European, his pride seems to detract from these honorable traits. And, Bablot believed this “arrogance” to be a result of Cortés’ Spanish heritage, an inherent racial trait. If Cuauhtémoc does not suffer from this “pride,” does that make his nobility, abnegation, and generosity more “civilized” than his Spanish counterpart? And, what does this mean for the racial hierarchy in *mestizaje*? Bablot performed his misgivings about the primacy afforded the European ideals, tastes, and values in *mestizaje* through the inconsistency in the dominant conception of *mestizaje*. It also pointed to possible contradictions in the formation of “civilized” behavior and judgment in *mestizaje*. Did the “education” of the indigenous include the undesirable aspects of European character? And, if not, could such “educated” individuals surpass the ideal? Bablot’s review demonstrated the unstable nature of *mestizaje* and its possible outcomes, while also reaffirming the ideal character traits in the ideologies that govern *mestizaje*.

The reception of Tamberlick’s visual depiction of Cuauhtémoc also reinforced existing ideas about racial difference and its impact on personal character. Despite his highly elaborate costume, reviews tended to focus on Tamberlick’s excessive use of makeup to darken his skin color in order to appear indigenous. Critics such as Enrique Chavarri thought that Tamberlick darkened his skin too much, which has added significance given the focus on skin “whitening” in the nation-building ideology of *mestizaje*. The paleness of Cuauhtémoc’s skin was a vital tool in repositioning him as a *mestizo*. This lack of accuracy in the visual portrayal both serves to reaffirm this ideal of white skin, as well as Tamberlick’s embodiment of the Mexican conception of European taste as a famous opera singer.

The focus on the slippage and excess in the failure of Tamberlick’s visual



representation painted this performance as “mimetic,” with mimicry as a part of a colonial strategy of dominance. Bhabha’s discussion of colonial mimicry focuses on the disruption and subversion of colonial authority through the production of the Europeanized “Self” among the colonized “Other.”<sup>293</sup> This “Other,” recreated by Tamberlick, desired the representation of Cuauhtémoc as mestizo and “civilized,” within the context of ideals of mestizaje in late nineteenth-century Mexico. Yet, Tamberlick decided to darken his skin while singing and acting as this desired “reformed and recognizable Other,” only to maintain Cuauhtémoc as a “subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.”<sup>294</sup>

In his 15 September 1871 review of Tamberlick’s portrayal of Cuauhtémoc, columnist Enrique Chavarri discussed the accuracy of the visual representation of the Aztec emperor. Unlike his use of makeup, Tamberlick’s costume and gestures were faithful to historical accounts of the Aztecs, such as that of Bernal Díaz. Chavarri wrote, “Tamberlick played Cuauhtémoc with nothing more to be desired, the costume, gesture, and even the actions imitated the last Mexican emperor with historical accuracy.”<sup>295</sup> This review makes an important distinction between the use of “historical accuracy” and the application of indigenous characteristics, as outlined by García Cubas and Pimentel. Cuauhtémoc is treated as a historical figure, rather than an example of the “degraded” indigenous peoples of Mexico. What did Chavarri mean, then, when referring to the “accuracy” of his gestures and actions? Given the musical and literary depiction of Cuauhtémoc in *Guatimotzín*, Chavarri

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<sup>293</sup> Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge Publishers, 2008), 121–131.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>295</sup> “Tamberlick hizo un Cuauhtémoc que no hubo más que pedir, el trage, el ademan, y hasta las acciones remedaron con much verdad histórica al ultimo de los emperadores mexicanos.” *Monitor Republicano*, 15 September 1871.

likely did not perceive these gestures and actions as those of the stereotypical “Indian.” The critical response to Tamberlick’s use of makeup further supported Chavarri’s conception of Cuauhtémoc.

In an article two days later, Chavarri penned a new review in which he critiqued Tamberlick’s use of makeup to darken his skin. Chavarri stated, “Tamberlick played Guatimotzín very well... we only think that he darkened his skin color too much, because historians present the prince with lighter skin, and Solís says he was so pale that he seemed a stranger among his own race.”<sup>296</sup> The portrayal of Cuauhtémoc in which the Other failed in copying the Aztec leader, served to reaffirm the physical ideal of pale skin in social processes of mestizaje. References to Cuauhtémoc’s pale skin also encourage one to read this as part of a strategy to reposition him as a quasi-European mestizo within the social hierarchy of mestizaje.

Chavarri’s focus on the excess in the failure of this portrayal demonstrates how Tamberlick created a reverse “mimetic” performance, one that cited, copied, and embodied the Other.<sup>297</sup> In this case the Italian performer copied the Self, the symbol of indigenous Mexican history. Its effects were similar to those Bhabha describes as characteristic of “mimicry.” When the Other’s (Tamberlick’s) copy of the Self (represented by Cuauhtémoc) produces excess, the performance not only asserts colonial authority, but also disrupts it.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> “Tamberlick hizo á Guatimotzin, y le caracterizó muy bien...solo creimos que exageró demasiado el color porque los historiadores nos presentan al principe tan poco oscuro de la piel que casi parecia, dice Solis, extranjero entre los de su propria raza.” Enrique Chavarri, *El Monitor Republicano*, 17 September 1871.

<sup>297</sup> Mulholland, “Mariachi in Excess,” PhD diss., York University, 2007, 17.

<sup>298</sup> Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 122; quoted in Mulholland, “Mariachi in Excess,” 18.

By placing this indigenous icon of cultural resistance in a higher position within the racial and cultural structures of mestizaje, this performance resisted the physical and behavioral stereotypes of the indigenous propagated in a variety of literary sources in late nineteenth-century Mexico, and exemplified by the studies by Francisco Pimentel and Antonio García Cubas.

As a performance of Chavarri's conception of mestizaje, the reviews of Tamberlick's portrayal of Cuauhtémoc illustrate an awareness of the importance of skin color in the perception of one's relationship to society in mestizaje. Chavarri's reaction to the dramatic depiction of Cuauhtémoc implies discomfort in applying the stereotypes of indigenous Mexicans to the Aztec leader. This could be due to his importance in Mexican history, or because of Chavarri's ambivalence towards the social and political processes in mestizaje that ascribe a lesser value to the Mexican, in comparison to the European. His reactions to Tamberlick's portrayal indicate ambiguities in the definition and goals of the social positioning and nation-building goals of mestizaje, especially those concerning the "whitening" and "civilizing" of the Mexican population.

Though Alfredo Bablot and Enrique Chavarri concentrated on different aspects of Cuauhtémoc's depiction in *Guatimotzín*, conceptions of indigenous Mexicans in the processes of mestizaje framed their responses to both the visual and aural components of his representation. As performances of their authors' personal experiences with and conceptions of mestizaje, the reviews illustrate how efforts to reposition Cuauhtémoc in terms of his racial and cultural identity highlight contradictions in the definitions of racial difference within mestizaje. Bablot's focus on the "civilized" behavior and judgment signaled its importance in the perception of indigenous versus European, while also drawing into

question the supposed inherent superiority of the European manifestation of mestizaje ideals. Through his critique of Tamberlick's attempt at racial authenticity, Chavarri emphasized the "mimetic" qualities of the portrayal of Cuauhtémoc, which both reifies the imagined "whiter" Mexico, while also subverting this aspect of the nation-building ideology by pointing to the indigenous Cuauhtémoc as a possible exemplar of this lighter-skinned people. Both Bablot and Chavarri pointed to the complications that arise in performing as an indigenous hero in a European genre in late nineteenth-century Mexico. The situation grew more complex in the performance of Cuauhtémoc's wife, the Princesa, who was played by a Mexican soprano of mixed racial heritage.

*Peralta's Princesa: Double the Mestiza/je*

When Enrico Moderatti decided to organize the premiere of *Guatimotzín* for his benefit concert, he turned to his two biggest stars, the Italian tenor Enrico Tamberlick and the Mexican soprano Angela Peralta, to create the starring roles of the Aztec ruler and his wife. Before traveling back to Mexico with Moderatti and Tamberlick in 1871, Peralta had spent the three previous years performing at opera houses around the world, including Havana, Madrid, and Florence. Upon her return to Mexico, she was lauded as a star of opera and as a symbol of Mexico's bright future. As a Mexican woman who established a worldwide career in European operas, she also was an example of what could be achieved with mestizaje through the social processes of educating and situating the individual in Mexican society.

Peralta's unique background within the opera scene expanded her performance of mestizaje to include her personal experience within the ideology, and her performance in the opera as the indigenous Princesa. Peralta demonstrated the lived process of mestizaje and the

symbolic embodiment of its ideal. In addition, reviews of her portrayal of the Princesa provide a window into critics' conceptions of mestizaje, as well as the complex issues surrounding the construction of indigenusness and the inclusive and exclusive natures of mestizaje. Enrique Chavarri's criticism of the lack of historical accuracy in her portrayal of the Aztec princess reinforced Peralta's position as an outsider to indigenous cultures, which also cemented her role as an exemplar of a "civilized" *mestiza*. And, in the process of forming this racially-mixed identity, reconstructed its components, European-ness and indigenusness.<sup>299</sup> The praise for Peralta's vocal execution as an opera singer indicate the perceived importance of connecting Mexico to Europe in the discourse of the political processes of mestizaje.

Angela Peralta's life as a Mexican opera singer exemplifies a lived experience of mestizaje through her negotiation of the social processes and her role as part of the *mestizo* national subject, a symbol of racial mixture. The critical reception of her opera performances in Mexico and abroad helped to position her as elite within Mexican society and the cultural and racial hierarchy of mestizaje. Through her success in opera, Peralta embodied the experience of the ideal "ascended" Mexican in the social and political ideologies of mestizaje. For example, despite her physical appearance, Mexico City newspapers depicted Peralta as quasi-European, due to her connections with Europe both as an established member of European opera companies and as a performer in a genre perceived primarily as European.

As a Mexican woman of mixed racial descent, Peralta had to negotiate ideas of racial difference and cultural superiority in mestizaje throughout her operatic career in Mexico and

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<sup>299</sup> Peter Wade, "'Rethinking Mestizaje: Ideology and Lived Experience,'" *Journal of Latin American Studies* 37 (2005): 245.

in Europe. Peralta was born in 1845 in Puebla to parents of mixed racial descent.<sup>300</sup> She debuted in Mexico City at the Gran Teatro Nacional in *Il trovatore* at the age of fifteen. She became such a sensation that, through a donation from a Sr. Santiago de la Vega, she was able to travel to Europe for further instruction. She made her debut in Milan in 1862 as “Lucía” in *Lucía di Lammermoor*. During these years abroad, Peralta performed throughout Italy, Spain and France, as well as in Austria and Egypt, and was hailed as “the Mexican nightingale.”<sup>301</sup> Upon her return to Mexico in 1865, she performed throughout Mexico as part of the Italian opera company of Annibale Biacchi and was made the court singer of the French monarchs Maximilian and Carlota. She embarked on another world tour in 1867, performing in Cuba, the United States, and throughout Europe, with Mexico City newspapers reprinting her rave reviews. When she again traveled back to Mexico in 1871 she brought the famed Italian tenor Enrico Tamberlick, as part of Enrico Moderatti’s opera company. Mexico City critics showered her with praise and poetry. It was then, as a star of this troupe, that she premiered Aniceto Ortega’s *Guatimotzín* in September of 1871.

Despite the indigenous aspects of her physical appearance, Peralta represented the ideal of the “educated” Mexican within the social processes of mestizaje. The critical reception of her performances in Mexico, as well as reprints of and quotes from reviews from Europe, helped to shape Peralta’s elevated status in Mexican society. By focusing on her successes in Europe and her connections to Mexico they depicted her as a representative of the continued “civilization” and modernization of Mexican society.

Peralta’s physical appearance likely did not conform to physical ideals of mestizaje,

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<sup>300</sup> Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, 201; Armando María y Campos, *Angela Peralta: El Ruiseñor Mexicano* (Mexico City: Ediciones Xochitl, 1944), 19–21.

<sup>301</sup> María y Campos, *Angela Peralta*, 43–52.

such as skin color and facial features. Mexican critics refrained from describing her appearance during her lifetime, but later writers such as Artemio del Valle Arizpe discussed her skin “of an indigenous brown,” and “imposing ugliness.”<sup>302</sup> This brown skin contrasts from the ideal of pale skin used to construct racial and cultural difference in the political ideology of *mestizaje*. How was Peralta able to “ascend” to quasi-European status? Her appearance served as a constant reminder of her association with Mexico, which furthered the reputation of Mexico abroad thanks to her acceptance in Europe and elsewhere as an opera star.

Critics in Mexico City emphasized Peralta’s embodied experience as a “civilized” Mexican, associated both with her home country and idealized Europe. For example, in *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* on 7 September 1871, an unknown poet stated, “You leave to show a far away region your glory as an artist and a Mexican.”<sup>303</sup> While this review emphasized her association with Mexico, Gerardo Silva wrote in the 17 November 1872 issue of *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, “The heavens of Europe have starred your step; that blessed land that has devoured so many generations and has given rise so many ideas, has placed on your head its most beautiful flowers.”<sup>304</sup> By highlighting the laurels Peralta received in the “blessed land” of Europe, Silva stressed her acceptance by those with “civilized” tastes and values. When seen as part of social processes enacting racial difference, this positioned Peralta as quasi-

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<sup>302</sup> Artemio de Valle-Arizpe, *Por la Vieja Calzada de Tlacopan*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 1980), 337.

<sup>303</sup> “Parte á ostentar á una region lejana tu Gloria como artista y mexicana.” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 7 September 1871.

<sup>304</sup> “El cielo de Europa se ha constelado á su paso; aquella tierra bendita que ha devorado á tantas generaciones y ha animado á tantas ideas, ha colocado sobre su frente sus flores mas hermosas.” Gerardo Silva, “Á Angela Peralta,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 17 November 1872.

European, a reflection of her experience of mestizaje as a famous opera singer in Mexico City. In the reception of *Guatimotzín*, reviewers maintained Peralta's status in mestizaje by creating a balance between praise for her operatic execution with a critique of the accuracy of her portrayal of an indigenous woman.

Peralta designed the costume of the Princesa herself, based on a variety of sources from historical codices to written histories. She consulted Mexican historian Enrique Chavero, politician and scholar Justo Sierra, as well as the Mendoza Codex published by Lord Kingsborough. Her hair was twisted into two horns (*a la malaca*), she wore a blue tunic or *huipilli* (the bright color was a symbol of her high status), and border on the skirt's edges was copied from a seal found in Texcoco. Despite her extensive efforts to depict a historically accurate Aztec princess, critics saw her costume as incomplete.

Criticism of Peralta's depiction of the Aztec Princesa is a performance of Peralta-as-*mestiza* by affirming her lack of indigenous authenticity. In stressing that she was not a "true" Indian, it draws attention to her position as an embodiment of the "civilized" social ideals of mestizaje. It also illuminates how the formation of the *mestiza* can reconstruct indigeness, and draw attention to the perceived tension between inclusion and exclusion in ideologies of mestizaje. In his review of the premiere of *Guatimotzín*, Enrique Chavarri noted the lack of total accuracy in Peralta's costume. "Angela Peralta, dressed like an Indian, also shone, but the costume was not as complete as desired." He realized that she intended to dress like the Aztec princess, but her costume did not satisfy his notions of historical or indigenous accuracy. This reinforced Peralta's position outside of indigenous culture, as a *mestiza* "educated" in European tastes and values represented by opera culture. By marking this difference in order to reference hierarchical distinctions, indigeness is reconstructed



through the process of exclusion—emphasizing the European, at the expense of the indigenous. It also points to the tension between this inherent inclusion and exclusion in mestizaje. While it may seem, through Peralta’s example, that everyone is eligible to become a *mestiza*, in reality the social processes of mestizaje marginalize indigeness, while valuing whiteness and European-ness.<sup>305</sup> Thus, the criticism of Peralta’s lack of accuracy constitutes a performance of her quasi-European status in Mexico City society.

Enrique Chavarri’s subsequent praise for Peralta’s vocal execution in *Guatimotzín* underscored her embodiment of the cultural ideal of mestizaje. Her voice allowed her to be quasi-European, while still Mexican at heart. In the 17 September 1871 discussion of *Guatimotzín* Chavarri declared, “Mrs. Peralta sang as sweetly as in Italian, and she seemed more animated pronouncing the language of her homeland.”<sup>306</sup> Despite the numerous works Peralta had sung in Italian, she seemed to prefer pronouncing the Spanish text, the language of her true home Mexico. Through the combination of success in Italian opera and her felt connection to Mexico, Peralta could perform the social processes of identity formation in mestizaje, and reflect others’ conceptions of racial difference. When considered alongside Peralta’s accomplishments, literary depictions, and physical appearance, the reception of Peralta’s portrayal of the Princesa exhibits the delicate balancing act that Mexican reviewers performed. Within the social ideologies of mestizaje they supported her worldwide operatic status as a quasi-European, while also acknowledging her mestiza roots in Mexico. Like her character in *Guatimotzín*, Peralta balanced multiple racial and cultural identities bound by

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<sup>305</sup> Wade, “Rethinking Mestizaje,” 239–240.

<sup>306</sup> “La Sra. Peralta cantaba tan dulcemente como en italiano, y parecía como que se animaba mas al pronunciar el idioma de su patria.” Enrique Chavarri, “Charla de los Domingos,” *El Monitor Republicano*, 17 September 1871.

music.

Critical reception of Tamberlick's and Peralta's portrayals of the Aztec ruler and the Princesa in *Guatimotzín* demonstrate the performative nature of mestizaje and identities formed in relation to its ideologies and processes. These reviews also provide insight into individual critics' definitions of and experiences with mestizaje, as well as its relationship to opera. As seen in the cases of Tamberlick and Peralta, their operatic performances both reaffirm ideals of cultural difference in mestizaje and help to position the performers and characters within the context of Mexican society and the social and political processes that regulate it.

### **Conclusion: Guatimotzín Performs Mestizaje**

The libretto, compositional choices, and reception of *Guatimotzín* articulate racial and cultural identities, as well as the contradictions and ambiguities within conceptions of mestizaje that govern these types of identity formation. When focusing on the portrayals of the Aztec ruler Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa, a new possibility emerges, that of quasi-European "civilized" indigenous figures who serve as national symbols of racial mixture. Operatic performance becomes more significant as a reflection of the perceptions of racial relations in late nineteenth-century Mexico City.

*Guatimotzín* is particularly useful in understanding the complexities of mestizaje, both as a social process and a nation-building (and homogenizing) ideology. For example, the depictions of Cuauhtémoc and the Princesa illustrate how mestizaje can be performed on multiple levels and in varying contexts within Mexican opera culture. In addition, the textual and musical components and their cultural associations highlight inconsistencies within

prevalent ideas of mestizaje and the formation and characterization of the *mestizo*. In these constructions of identity, *Gautimotzín* points towards more fluid boundaries between racial and cultural categories, as illustrated by the quasi-European *mestizo* positioning of the indigenous ruler, Cuauhtémoc. Through this, we understand that identity is increasingly based on performance within a specific cultural and ideological context. And, this performance is constituted by a variety of lived experiences, such as racial differences in mestizaje and shifting gender relationships.

## CHAPTER 4

### OPERATIC OBSTACLES: GENDERED EXPECTATIONS IN THE OPERA SCENE

Late nineteenth-century Mexican scholars and politicians had restricted conceptions of gender roles and stereotypes, especially concerning masculinity and femininity. Women who performed in operas and zarzuelas had to negotiate feminine ideals including domestic responsibility and moral purity, as well as prevalent conceptions of beauty such as pale skin and fine features. Male performers had to consider masculine ideals such as virility and bravery not only in their personal lives, but also in making artistic choices, such as which works to perform, characters to portray, costumes to wear, and how to express the character's emotions through their singing. If their performance or public image challenged established gender norms or expectations, they risked backlash from the press and but also limited attendance, as the upper classes that formed most of the opera and zarzuela audiences were also those who supported most fervently the dominant standards of femininity and masculinity and racial difference.

Despite their differing backgrounds and genres of performance, Amalia Gómez, Angela Peralta, and Enrico Tamberlick all had to deal with societal expectations of them as a woman, man, European, and Mexican, especially in their artistic careers, which were impacted by reviews and interpretations of their public images. Can-can dancer Amalia Gómez, Mexican soprano Angela Peralta, and Italian tenor Enrico Tamberlick overcame the

obstacles presented by these societal constructs, and became empowered through their behavior on-stage, characters they played, singing style, and general successes in the public sphere.

Women and men in late nineteenth-century Mexico had to negotiate strict conceptions of femininity and masculinity, as well as prescribed gender norms that related closely to class and racial hierarchies. Elites from Europe and of European descent were seen as models of beauty, as well as morality and purity (women), or bravery and honor (men). Upper-class women were expected to stay in the home in order to care for their husband and children and educate them in religious morality, while their husbands worked outside of the home. Women were expected to follow the example of Mary in their piety, modesty, and by setting an example of moral righteousness.<sup>307</sup> In this context, women with public careers, such as opera and zarzuela performers, shaped their public image as part of a critical discourse in which intellectuals, politicians, and critics debated women's roles in Mexican society.

Though the Spanish singer/actress Amalia Gómez began her career singing in Spanish zarzuelas, she rose to fame because of her prominence in the premiere of the can-can, and the subsequent controversy surrounding this "lascivious" dance. While performing in a society with limited ideas of what was considered appropriate appearance and public comportment for women, she could have chosen to minimize the risqué elements of her costume, dance moves, and opera plot. Others, such as Emilia Serrano, made such alterations when performing European, and particularly French, works in Mexico. Gómez instead wore the shorter skirts found in Parisian performances, and lifted her skirt even higher to expose

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<sup>307</sup> Julia Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico: A Past Unveiled*, trans. Alan Hynds (Austin, TX: University of Texas at Austin Institute for Latin American Studies, 1999), 50–51.

her legs during the high kicks in the can-can. Her dance then also constitutes an example of Butler's concept of performed gender in which our bodily actions and decisions in presenting our bodies illustrate a particular interpretation of gender in a given cultural context.<sup>308</sup> In Mexico, Gómez's bodily performances helped to create a craving for the can-can in multiple venues and genres, from opera and zarzuela arrangements to variety shows and new and scandalous social dances.

Drawing on Mary Douglas and Susan Bordo, Gómez's body then became inscribed with Mexican culture. Her body became the locus of social contentions, such as changing constructions of femininity and the role of imported European culture in Mexico. In the press in particular, Gómez's performances of the can-can incited an intense debate about the strict conceptions of women's roles in Mexican society and the purpose of public entertainment. Critics, especially Ignacio Altamirano and Baron Gostkowski, expressed concern about the potential impact from the influence of the "lascivious" nature of the can-can on the morality of Mexican women and Mexican audiences. Gómez continued to perform the can-can according to her own standards of decency and bodily femininity, thereby forging her own career path in the face of prescribed norms and potentially career-ending criticism. These responses to her performances demonstrate Douglas's and Bordo's principle of the "inscribed body," that a woman's body can be a site of contested cultural ideals, such as femininity and morality (purity, virtue, honor), and how conceptions of gender gain meaning through performance and interpretation.

Angela Peralta also challenged dominant conceptions of femininity and a woman's role in Mexican society through her professional choices, as well as her personal appearance.

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<sup>308</sup> Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (1988): 523–524.

She not only pursued a public career on the stage, but also directed her own opera company and published her own compositions. Mexican politicians, intellectuals, and newspaper columnists asserted that a woman should stay home and take care of her children and husband, rather than work. They especially objected to a woman putting her own professional needs ahead of those of her family. Instead of following the path chosen for her (marriage, family, home) Peralta expanded her operatic career after marrying her husband, and did not abandon her musical career until her untimely death from yellow fever at the age of 38 while on a performing tour in Mexico.

Peralta's reputation and public image relied heavily on the sound of her voice, rather than her physicality. Peralta's reception also exemplifies a "culturally-inscribed" body, though the complex relationships between Peralta's voice, her physical characteristics, and concepts of femininity resulted in a unique literary articulation of her public image. Peralta was of indigenous heritage, as described in the previous chapter, and was known for her odd appearance, which did not conform to prevalent ideals of beauty or femininity. In their reviews of her performances, the Mexico City press focused on her voice, instead of her physical appearance, and used her voice to depict her as a "civilized" Mexican woman, which in turn imbued the stage with new meaning as an acceptable place for Peralta's feminine persona. The image of Peralta shaped by critics exemplified societal expectations of women in the face of increasing visibility of prostitution and recognition of *chinas poblanas*, who were *mestizas* associated with a particular type of dress and overt sexuality, which many believed threatened the moral fiber of Mexican society.

Peralta's published salon compositions, the 1875 *Album Musical*, contributed to the perception of her demure persona, particularly the album's musical character, cover

illustrations, and the reception of this music's performances in Mexico City newspapers. The music itself conformed to styles deemed appropriate for the home, and the covers depict well-dressed women in the home, the sphere of the nineteenth-century Mexican woman. In reviews of performances of Peralta's pieces, critics again chose to focus aspects that remained consistent with prescribed norms for Mexican women. Rather than emphasize the aesthetic quality or character of the compositions, reviewers wrote about the musicians and conductor who performed the pieces, as well as Peralta's feminine response to the "honor" bestowed on her music by its performance. Thus, Peralta's musical career and personal choices reflect her ongoing engagement with dominant conceptions of femininity, beauty, and restrictive gender roles in nineteenth-century Mexican culture.

Like both Amalia Gómez and Angela Peralta, Enrico Tamberlick did not conform to gender expectations, especially concerning his aesthetic choices and the roles he portrayed. Tamberlick premiered the role of the suffering Aztec emperor Cuauhtémoc in Aniceto Ortega's *Guatimotzín*. In Ortega's opera, Cuauhtémoc's constant lamenting and inaction stood in contrast to prevalent ideals concerning masculine heroes, especially in operas of this period. Operatic heroes needed to take action in the name of love or honor, as did Roméo in *Roméo e Juliette*, Edgardo in *Lucía di Lammermoor*, and Ernani in *Ernani*.<sup>309</sup> This problematic relationship with what Connell and Messerschmidt call the "hegemonic masculinity" was heightened by the qualities associated with Tamberlick's voice. While most heroic tenors were expected to have powerful and rich voices, Tamberlick possessed a sweet,

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<sup>309</sup> See, for example, William Grim, "The Male Heroine in Opera," *Opera Journal* 30, no. 3 (September, 1997): 2–3; Annamaria Cecconi, "Knives and Tears: Representations of Masculinity in Late Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera," *Masculinity and Western Musical Practice*, ed. Ian Biddle and Kirsten Gibson (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2009): 232–233.



expressive and pure voice (descriptors used more often with the ideal woman's voice). Despite his departures from aesthetic and emotional expectations for the masculine hero, critics praised both Tamberlick's vocal expression and the depiction of Cuauhtémoc in the opera, demonstrating his ability to overcome gender expectations. His performance highlights the complicated relationship between masculinity and opera, where male singers are expected to express their character's emotions. Tamberlick's singing and acting illustrated the malleability of accepted sociocultural constructs such as masculinity, or as Demetriou describes, the potential for the "hegemonic masculinity" to absorb or reframe "alternative masculinities."

By studying the careers of Amalia Gómez, Angela Peralta, and Enrico Tamberlick we can see how the conceptions of gender and gender roles in Mexican society impacted the opera scene as a whole, and the reception of individual artists in particular. Gómez and Peralta represent contrasting genres and styles of opera, but both struggled against prevalent conceptions of femininity and a woman's proper role, when making decisions about their interpretations and career goals. Through his artistic choices, Tamberlick illuminated the contradictions in conceptions of masculinity and expectations of opera performers. Gómez, Peralta, and Tamberlick provide complementary examples of how performers reinforced and challenged social constructs. Their choices in performances and in their personal lives illustrate the interdependency of nationality, and gender roles on the Mexico City stage and in larger Mexican society.

### **Gender in Nineteenth-Century Mexico City**

Nineteenth-century Mexico City, like much of Europe, was a patriarchal society in

which the laws and social expectations supported male domination, and relegated women to subservient roles. While men worked, upper-class women were expected to stay in the home, maintaining peace and order in the private sphere.<sup>310</sup> In contrast many lower-class urban women worked outside the home as servants, factory workers, and as food-sellers in markets.<sup>311</sup> Legally, women did not have rights guaranteed to men, such as ownership of property. And, though education was increasingly made available to women, its goal was to make women “good daughters, excellent mothers, and the best and most solid support of the goals of society.”<sup>312</sup> Newspapers became a venue for men and a few women to contribute to the discourse on women’s supposed nature, which included morality, modesty, and spirituality. Known moralists, politicians, and intellectuals weighed in on the debate about women’s roles, rights, and apparent inferiority to men. These writers looked to European women as examples of how to dress as well as models of feminine beauty and good taste. It was hoped that by encouraging European immigration, tourism, and by reprinting items on fashion and morality from European newspapers, women in Mexico would model themselves on their European counterparts.

As the elites focused on creating a “European” femininity in Mexico, the Church continued to play an important role in reinforcing the restrictive gender norms in Mexican society, especially in constructions of female morality and piety. Women participated in Church activities as nuns or as keepers of the faith, both positions under the supervision of

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<sup>310</sup> Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico*, 47.

<sup>311</sup> Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico*, 57.

<sup>312</sup> “Discourse on the Influence of Public Instruction on the Happiness of Nations,” 1852; quoted in Sylvia M. Arrom, *The Women of Mexico City, 1790–1857* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 23.

men, as part of accepted feminine society.<sup>313</sup> According to religious doctrine, the best ways for women to serve God were as nuns (through sacred virginity) or as wives and mothers. Thus, marriage became a significant vehicle through which the Church helped to enforce gender inequalities. Though mistreatment and violence against women was common in marriages, it was very difficult for women to obtain divorces on these grounds, and such a decision would negatively affect a woman's reputation for the rest of her life.<sup>314</sup> She would have disrupted women's most critical contribution to society, that of maintaining honor and moral values in her family.

Mexican newspapers and pamphlets advocated women's conformity to expectations of morality, and the importance of their role in the home. Baroness Emilia Serrano Wilson, a famous Spanish writer, describes women's valued virtues and her role in the home.<sup>315</sup> She states, "Woman, with sweetness she can do anything, reaches everything, and her moral beauty, her virtues...shine in their minor actions..."<sup>316</sup> The most important aspects of women's character are those that conform to societal expectations: sweetness, moral goodness, and other virtues. Such qualities will also help her reach her goals, as they are associated with her main roles as wife and mother. Baroness Wilson's belief in the significance of motherhood can also be seen in her writings. For example, she explains how a

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<sup>313</sup> Françoise Carner, "Estereotipos Femeninos en el Siglo XIX," *Presencia y Transparencia: la Mujer en la Historia de México* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 1987), 100.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>315</sup> Emilia Serrano de Wilson, *Las Perlas del Corazón: Deber y Aspiraciones de la Mujer en su Vida Intima* (Pearls of the heart; duty and aspirations of the woman in her private life), 51, 60, 61; quoted in Martha Eva Rocha, *El Album de la Mujer: Antología Ilustrada de las Mexicanas*, vol. 4: El Porfiriato y la Revolución (Mexico City: INAH, 1991), 35–37.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*

woman's role in the home is more important than anything in the outside world. According to Wilson, the "domestic role" is "a golden dream, the beautiful ideal that in old age can fill all aspirations, and is a thousand times more loved, more sacred, and for all ideas preferable to the great gatherings of the big world."<sup>317</sup> A woman should strive to be the "beautiful ideal" of wife and mother, which is "for all ideas preferable" to anything she could do outside the home. Many Mexican scholars and politicians agreed with Wilson, and this position was crucial in discussions of women's education.

Though opportunities for women to find education increased in the second half of the nineteenth century, many debated the merits of educating women. Even those in favor, such as Justo Sierra and Concepción Gimeno de Flaquer had differing opinions about the purpose of education. Gimeno de Flaquer cited the improvement of women's conditions and better jobs as positive results, while Sierra concentrated on how education could better prepare a woman for her role as wife and mother. Luis E. Ruiz and other intellectuals however worried that education might cause women to reconsider their role in society. Ruiz was particularly concerned about women competing with men for work, and the possible detrimental relationship to a woman's position at home.

In the Mexican newspaper *El Album de la Mujer*, Spanish-Mexican novelist Gimeno de Flaquer advocated the expansion of women's education as a way to improve their lives. This newspaper, written by and for women, had a unique platform and audience, which allowed its writers to address women's issues more directly than in, for example, a mainstream Mexico City newspaper.<sup>318</sup> In the article "La obrera Mexicana" (the Mexican

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<sup>317</sup> Rocha, *El Album de la Mujer*, 35–37.

<sup>318</sup> Carmen Ramos Escandón, "Género e identidad femenina y nacional en 'El Album de la

woman worker), Gimeno de Flaquer explained why all should advocate women's education.<sup>319</sup> "Philosophers, moralists, legislators and governors, create centers for teaching where it will be shown [that it is necessary to create lucrative jobs for women]... Giving instruction to women and well-paying work, you will better the customs because instruction moralizes."<sup>320</sup> Gimeno de Flaquer has a specific goal in mind for women's education—better jobs for women. In order to place educational goals in the context of conceptions of femininity, she adds that further instruction will also "moralize" women, and aid in the formation of one of women's virtues, morality.

Gimeno de Flaquer was not alone in seeking to advance women's education, but most Mexican intellectuals and politicians, such as Justo Sierra, focused solely on how education could help women to improve their family's home life. In a speech to the students of the Escuela Miguel Lerdo, Sierra stated, "The educated woman will be truly one for the home. She will be the companion and collaborator of man in the formation of the family. You are called on to form souls, sustain the soul of your husband."<sup>321</sup> Education was only beneficial to women if it helped her in her traditional role in the home. First and foremost, *científicos*,

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Mujer' de Concepción Gimeno de Flaquer," *La República de las Letras: Asomos a la Cultura Escrita del México Decimonónico*, vol. 2, coord. Belem Clark de Lara and Elisa Guerra (Mexico City: UNAM, 2005), 195–208.

<sup>319</sup> "Concepción Gimeno de Flaquer, "La Obrero Mexicana," *El Album de la Mujer* (1884): 3–5; quoted in Rocha, *El Album de la Mujer*, 173–177.

<sup>320</sup> "Filósofos, moralistas, legisladores y gobernantes, cread... centros de enseñanza donde pueda ilustrarse [que es necesario crear para la mujer ocupaciones lucrativas]... Dando a la mujer instrucción y trabajo bien retribuido, mejoraréis las costumbres, porque la instrucción moraliza." "La obrera Mexicana," *El Album de la Mujer* (1884): 3–5.

<sup>321</sup> Justo Sierra, *Obras Completas, la Educación Nacional*, Vol. VIII (Mexico: UNAM, 1948), 329; quoted in Mary K. Vaughan, "Women, Class, and Education in Mexico, 1880–1928," *Latin American Perspectives* 12–13, no. 1–2 (1977): 138–139.

Porfirio Díaz's intellectual and political advisers, used education to help maintain existing power relationships and gender norms, under which a woman served both her children, by teaching them about morality, and her husband, who she encouraged and consoled. The debate about education related closely to professional actresses and singers, like Gómez and Peralta, who sought further artistic education, and pursued jobs outside the home. As in other fields of middle- and upper-class women's education, such as reading and writing, learning to sing was considered part of preparation for courtship and marriage, rather than training for a profession in music.<sup>322</sup>

Sierra believed that education would help women to better execute their jobs at home, while others such as Luis Ruiz considered women's education a threat to maintaining the ideal home life. In his article "¿Educar a una mujer para que compita con el hombre o lo aventaje?" [Educate a woman so that she competes with man or outdoes him?] Luis E. Ruiz expressed the worries of many men in Mexico City. If women received education equal to that of men, would they seek the same professions, such as law or politics?<sup>323</sup> And, how would this impact their role at home? In Ruiz's opinion, women should not expect to have the same professional goals as men because, as he stated "every section of humanity has a well-defined objective. A woman's role in the sanctuary of her home is so fundamentally important that any other activity she would like to devote herself to... would be small and miserable in comparison..."<sup>324</sup> Thus, if education leads her to pursue activities or work

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<sup>322</sup> Carner, "Estereotipos Femeninos," 103–104.

<sup>323</sup> Luis E. Ruiz, "¿Educar a una mujer para que compita con el hombre o lo aventaje?" (article in response to "La educación de la mujer" [The education of woman] by J.M. Vigil, *El Correo de la Señoras* (1884): 630–631; quoted in Rocha, *El Album de la Mujer*, 141–146.

<sup>324</sup> "Cada sección de la humanidad tiene su objeto bien definido. El papel de la mujer es tan

outside the home, her maintenance of the “sanctuary of her home” might suffer, and her role at home determines her success as a woman in Mexican society.

Women were considered intellectually inferior because their reasoning was supposedly limited by biology, although their lack of ambition, their affective capacity, and their predilection for menial labor supposedly made them morally superior.<sup>325</sup> This was given as a primary reason for their lack of equal rights as citizens, such as the ability to administer property, to vote, and to work in the profession they choose.<sup>326</sup> The belief that women should have a limited role in society had legal ramifications in the Civil Codes of both 1870 and 1884. In the Civil Code of 1870, women were deemed subordinate to their husbands, who administered their property and whose permission they needed in order to obtain work.<sup>327</sup> The restrictions on women’s rights continued in the 1884 Civil Code. In his legal treatise, “Points about the status of women,” Génaro García examines in detail the ways in which the Civil Code of 1884 limited women’s rights in Mexican society. For example, a woman could not serve as a legal witness or a judge (with few exceptions), and women remained unfairly disadvantaged in divorce.<sup>328</sup> Such gender norms were used to legitimize the patriarchal power structure in civil society that produced inequality. Despite increased opportunities in education, women in Mexico remained restricted by societal expectations and a lack of equal

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fundamentalmente importante en el santuario del hogar que cualquiera otra actividad á que quisiera consagrarse...sería pequeño y miserable en comparación.” Rocha, *Album de la Mujer*, 140.

<sup>325</sup> Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico*, 74.

<sup>326</sup> See, for example, Genaro García, *Apuntes sobre la Condición de la Mujer* (Mexico City: Compañía Limit. de Topógrafos, 1891), 14–29.

<sup>327</sup> Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico*, 74.

<sup>328</sup> García, *Condición de la Mujer*, 44–45, 53.

rights under the law. In order to gain audiences' acceptance in Mexico women on the stage had to balance their public career with efforts to represent a feminine woman both on and off the stage.

### *Women's Place in the World of Music*

Artistic endeavors in Mexico City, such as opera, generally reinforced dominant conceptions of women's intellect, emotion, sexuality, and morality. Operas, such as *Nabucco*, which featured strong female characters who challenged gender norms tended to not be as in-demand in Mexico City as operas that supported prevalent conceptions of women. For example, Bellini's opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*, a popular work in Mexico City opera houses and one of Peralta's signature roles, emphasized the emotional fragility and importance of morality for women, and played upon the trope of the "mad" woman common in nineteenth-century literature. In reviews of stage performances, Mexican critics praised female performers, particularly in roles like *Lucia* that conformed to societal gender constructs. Reviews of female performers tended to focus on the women's physical features, rather than their artistic accomplishments, while reception of the male singers and actors dealt primarily with their skill on stage. This resulted in a specific discourse concerning women's beauty, which included both appearance and comportment.

The reviews of Italian performer Carolina Civil exemplify the attention paid to women's physical appearance in Mexico City newspapers, and the idolization of European women for their beauty and femininity. Carolina Civil, an Italian actress and singer, was widely admired for her beauty, as is evident in Ignacio Altamirano's description of her in his newspaper, *El Renacimiento*. He wrote, "Carolina Civil is young and beautiful: in her



expressive blue eyes one sees high intelligence... Her mouth is small, her nose fine, her skin very white, her forehead is clear and well-formed, her air serious and very modest” (see Figure 4-1).<sup>329</sup> It is important to note that Altamirano focuses on physical characteristics that differed from those of, for example, indigenous Mexicans, such as her blue eyes and pale skin.<sup>330</sup> Her appearance is also tied to positive traits, including high intelligence and modesty, which bears special significance because of its association with femininity. The reception of women such as Carolina Civili therefore served to cement the relationship between perceptions of race and beauty, and also the association of Europe with the ideal in taste and culture.



**Figure 4-1: Lithographic Print of Carolina Civili.**  
*El Renacimiento*, 31 July 1869.

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<sup>329</sup> “Carolina Civili es joven y hermosa: en sus ojos azules y expresivos se adivina la inteligencia mas elevada... Su boca es pequeña, su nariz fina, su cutis blanquísimo, su frente despejada y bien hecha, su arie grave y modestísimo.” Ignacio M. Altamirano, “Carolina Civili,” *El Renacimiento*, 17 July 1869.

<sup>330</sup> In contrast, American tourist Fanny Gooch admired most the *mestizas* in traditional clothing, rather than the more European-influenced elites, during her visit to Mexico City in the 1880s.

*Masculinity in Nineteenth-Century Mexico*

Dominant conceptions of masculinity largely formed in opposition to qualities perceived as feminine, and therefore included characteristics such as virility, aggression, and bravery. Like the feminine, the masculine norm was generally determined by the ruling elites, who modeled their “civilized” lifestyle on Europe.<sup>331</sup> There was a strict line of division between “men of honor” (masculine elites) and all others. As a European, Tamberlick was seen as especially equipped to exemplify the gentlemanly qualities associated with refined and masculine men. While Mexican men could emulate European gentlemen, they could never attain the ideal. Connections between masculinity and European modernity can also be seen in descriptions of gun dueling in Mexico, which was said to express not only masculinity, but also Mexicans’ cosmopolitanism because it was practiced by contemporary European elites.<sup>332</sup> This is especially important in considering the correlation of certain masculine characteristics outside the ideal with racial identity in Mexico during this period. William French notes that to lose land, for example, meant to have one’s masculinity questioned, to be cast as a barbarian rather than civilized, to be transformed from white to ethnically Indian.<sup>333</sup> The public defense of honor, whether one’s own or that of a woman or family, stated an individual’s claim to high social status and proved his conformity, at least in

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<sup>331</sup> Pablo Piccato, “Politics and the Technology of Honor: Dueling in Turn-of-the-Century Mexico,” *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 2 (1999): 331.

<sup>332</sup> Piccato, “Politics and the Technology of Honor,” 333.

<sup>333</sup> William E. French, “Imagining and the Culture of Nineteenth-Century Mexico,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 79, no. 2, Special Issue: “Mexico’s New Cultural History: Una Lucha Libre” (1999): 263.

part, to the masculine ideal.<sup>334</sup>

Alongside prevalent conceptions of masculinity existed alternate formulations in areas such as literature. For example, depictions of homosocial and homoerotic relationships were common in nineteenth-century Mexican novels. Male homosocial bonding consisted of strong relationships between physically strong, handsome and charismatic men. It was the key allegory of national integration in literature, and served to unify and civilize male citizens. Such writings further supported the subordinate position of effeminacy in men by emphasizing the importance of characteristics such as strength and bravery, and thereby reinforcing the perceived differences between masculinity and femininity.<sup>335</sup>

The continued differentiation between male and female spheres in nineteenth-century Mexican society was also made more complicated by the presence of professional female singers, actors, and dancers in operas and zarzuelas. As seen in the reception of Amalia Gómez, critics created a clear separation between a woman's on-stage behavior and reputation off-stage. So, Gómez could wear short skirts and dance with high kicks as long as she still conformed to ideals of femininity, such as modesty, off-stage. Women performers' femininity depended on a variety of factors, such as their racial heritage and the genre in which they performed. While Gómez's European origin afforded her more freedom in terms of expressing gender roles and traits, Peralta's Mexican heritage made it more important that she prove herself on and off-stage as "civilized" and "cultured" (European), including conforming to gender norms. As Italian opera singers were considered the most innocent and pure, while the zarzuela singers/dancers (and especially those in zarzuelas bufas) risked

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<sup>334</sup> Piccato, "Politics and the Technology of Honor," 334.

<sup>335</sup> Robert McKee Irwin, *Mexican Masculinities*, Cultural Studies of the Americas, vol. 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), xxx.

exhibiting aspects of their scandalous performances in their lives off the stage. In these circumstances, Gómez's reception becomes even more significant because it contradicted widely-held perceptions of zarzuela can-can dancers.

Gómez was able to thrive outside gender norms in part because she also symbolized French taste and influence, which became increasingly important to elites in Mexico City. Many viewed her sensual femininity on stage as a signal that the Mexican conceptions of gender roles and characteristics needed to adapt to European definitions of modernity, signified in part by the can-can. In contrast, Peralta's conformity to ideals of Mexican femininity on stage was crucial to maintaining her status as a successful performer.

Tamberlick's is a more complicated case because, though he usually played heroic roles on stage, his voice exhibited "feminine" qualities, and there was no discussion of his off-stage behaviors to cement his masculinity. When compared to other operatic heroes, Cuauhtémoc and the other role he was known for in Mexico, Rossini's Otello, lack certain traits seen as essential to proving one's masculinity.<sup>336</sup> I believe that his previous success in Europe in other, more stereotypically heroic roles allowed him to overcome his lack of honorable aggression and vocal power as Cuauhtémoc and Otello. The relationship of the performer to Mexico, as seen in the unique receptions of Gómez, Peralta, and Tamberlick, therefore significantly impacted their ability to challenge dominant conceptions of masculinity and femininity, while remaining representative of gender differences.

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<sup>336</sup> The roles of Otello and Cuauhtémoc also represent the diversity among operatic treatments of non-white heroes. While Otello is characterized by strident power before he delves into madness, Cuauhtémoc remains subservient and in abject mourning throughout *Guatimotzín*.

### **Revolutionary Cancanera: Amalia Gómez in Mexico City**

When Amalia Gómez arrived in Mexico City in 1869, she had already established herself as a talented singer and actress in zarzuelas in her native Spain. The “character contralto” came with Joaquín Gaztambide’s zarzuela company in May of that year, and enjoyed success in traditional productions including *Las Hijas de Eva*, by Don Luis Mariano de Larra (libretto) and Joaquín Gaztambide (music). For example, in the 9 May 1869 issue of *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, a critic noted that, though she had much to learn in terms of her vocal and dramatic expression, the taste and expression of her “small and opaque” voice in the *romanza* of the Third Act of *Las Hijas de Eva* resulted in applause from the audience.

Though she already had an established reputation as an accomplished zarzuela singer and dancer, Gómez’s performance of the can-can in July of 1869 forever altered Mexican audiences’ and critics’ perception of her. They no longer focused on her voice and acting, but rather her mastery of the French style of dance, fashion, and coquetry. Her high kicks, short dresses, and seductive behavior on stage all contributed to the overall perception of Gómez and the can-can as risqué. Gómez’s body and bodily movements, as defined through aesthetic discourses, became symbols of French influence, the fetishism of femininity, and the restrictions placed on women in Mexico City society. The “fine beauty of the bodies” of dancers like Gómez, therefore invoked for the gazes of the can-can’s mostly male audiences ideas of femininity, beauty, and gender roles as filtered through opera and musical theater, in the context of late nineteenth-century Mexican culture.

In order to understand the scope and ramifications of the can-can’s popularity, Gómez’s body and the can-can should be viewed in the context of the reception of Offenbach’s music, as well as historical social ideals, power structures, and literary

representations of gender in the nineteenth-century Mexico. For example, French and Mexican cultures inscribed Gómez's body with prevalent conceptions of beauty and refined femininity. In addition, cultural symbols visible in discussions of her dancing interacted with historical memory of the French occupation and civilizing goals of mestizaje in intellectual and political circles in Mexican society. Discourses in her reception address Gómez and the can-can and their relationships to segments of class and power structures, belief systems and political leanings by relating artistic performance and reception to the "Frenchization" of Mexico and the continued admiration for European tastes and social ideologies. The history of the can-can dance in France helps to explain the close relationship between perceptions of Offenbach's works, the can-can, and the dancers as potentially harmful to the moral fiber of Mexican society.

Though the "can-can" was included as a theatrical dance in reviews and variety shows in the 1840s, it was not until Jacques Offenbach's "Galopa infernal" in his 1858 opéra comique (French comic opera) *Orphée aux enfers* when it was christened a theater staple. When it became popular in Spain in the 1860s, Spanish zarzuela composer Joaquín Gaztambide decided to make a zarzuela arrangement of the immensely successful *Orphée aux enfers*. He then brought his troupe, including Amalia Gómez, and the arrangement, called *Los Dioses del Olimpo* on a tour of the Americas in 1869. They arrived in Mexico City in March, and after months of performing more traditional zarzuelas they premiered *Los Dioses del Olimpo* (The Gods of Olympus) on 22 June 1869 at the Teatro Nacional.

Amalia Gómez, as the goddess "Juno" in *Los Dioses del Olimpo*, received rave reviews for her performance, especially for her dancing of the can-can. Gómez was even

compared to the Parisian Queen of the can-can, Rigolboche.<sup>337</sup> Ignacio Altamirano wrote in *El Renacimiento*, “The great triumph, marvelous, without rival, was that of Gómez, who played the role of Juno and who placed the can-can on a pedestal in the great theater of Mexico...Gómez, the worthy disciple of Rigolboche, has elevated herself to the apogee in *Los dioses del Olimpo*.”<sup>338</sup> Gómez established herself as one of the stars of the Mexico City music scene through her fearless rendition of the can-can. The myriad of risqué elements, including the short skirts and high kicks of the can-can, only added to the controversy surrounding the dance. As we will see, initial positive responses soon gave way to harsh judgments. Gómez’s decision to maintain the Parisian version of the can-can led many critics to condemn her and other can-can dancers as immoral and corrupting influences on Mexican society. Gómez’s can-can then illustrated a performance gender in which her failure to “do her gender right” resulted in criticism and/or punishment.<sup>339</sup>

In the critical reception of the can-can in Mexico City, the dancing body became a site of ongoing debates about the effects of the increasing “Frenchification” of Mexican society, particularly in the arts. As Ignacio Altamirano stated in *El Renacimiento*, “We dress like the French, we eat like the French, we live like the French, we think like the French.”<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Rigolboche was a nineteenth-century French dancer known for her “violent” interpretations of the can-can, her promiscuity and preferring to dress in men’s clothing, instead of the corsets and dresses worn by women. (David Price, *Cancan!*, 35)

<sup>338</sup> “El triunfo grande, portentoso, sin rival, fué el que obtuvo la Gomez, que hizo el papel de Juno y que levantó un pedestal en el gran teatro de México... La Gomez, digna discípula de Rigolboche, se eleva en *Los dioses del Olimpo* hasta el apogeo.” Ignacio Altamirano, “Crónica de la Semana,” *El Renacimiento*, 3 July 1869.

<sup>339</sup> Butler, “Performative Acts,” 522.

<sup>340</sup> “Vestimos á la francesa, comemos á la francesa, vivimos á la francesa, pensamos á la francesa.” Ignacio Altamirano, “Revista de la semana,” *El Renacimiento*, 3 July 1869.

Many in the government and upper echelons of society considered France a model of cultural sophistication and political modernity. In reviews of the can-can, however, it became clear that many doubted that Mexico's absorption of French culture would result in a more "civilized" and "modern" Mexican society. Paris, as the original home of the can-can, was called the "modern Babylon," and considered as depraved, corrupt, and immoral as the ancient city described in the Bible, known for its corruption and immorality.<sup>341</sup> Ignacio Altamirano agreed that the can-can represented corruption, but was certain that Mexican women would be able to resist its temptation. "They have attended in their boxes and ground-floor seats; but they have not enjoyed it, they have been disgusted. Thank God the women of Mexico might not be very learned, but still have morality and virtue... whichever corrupt genre comes from Europe to invade us, one will still find in the soul of the Mexican woman the guardian angel of modesty and dignity."<sup>342</sup> Altamirano believed that the sensuous movements of the dancers' bodies, as representative of the negative influence from France, could exert influence on some in the Mexican audiences but would not change what he considered to be the essentially moral and virtuous character of Mexican women.

Gaztambide's arrangement of *Orphée aux enfers* became famous for its inclusion of otherwise taboo topics in Mexican theater, such as love triangles, seduction, and eroticism, as originally written by French librettists Hector-Jonathan Crémieux and Ludovic Halévy. Like other French comic operas, it made fun of "...all the worries and vices that afflict the old

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<sup>341</sup> Maya Ramos Smith, *Teatro Musical y Danza en el México de la Belle Epoque (1867–1910)* (Mexico City: Grupo Editorial Gaceta, 1995), 95.

<sup>342</sup> "Han asistido en sus palcos y en el patio; pero no han gozado, no han tenido gusto. Garcias á Dios, las mujeres de México podrán ser poco ilustradas, pero aun tienen moralidad y virtud... cualquiera de los géneros corruptos que viene de Europa á invadirnos, se encuentra todavía en el alma de la mujer Mexicana al ángel guardian del pudor y de la dignidad." Ignacio Altamirano, "Crónica de la Semana," *El Renacimiento*, 17 July 1869.



world.”<sup>343</sup> The general plot includes parts of the classical myth of Orpheus and Eurydice with complications, as well as added scenes with the gods on Mount Olympus. In the new version, Orpheus and Eurydice are married, but she is having an affair with a man who is really Pluto, god of the underworld, and she soon dies and follows him down to his home (to the delight of Orpheus). In Act Two, the gods on Mount Olympus talk about Pluto’s kidnapping of the mortal woman Eurydice. Just as the gods begin to revolt against their leader, Jupiter, Orpheus reluctantly comes to reclaim Eurydice. Act three focuses on Eurydice’s imprisonment in Hades, and her escape with Jupiter to Mount Olympus. The final Act begins with a party, which includes the can-can or *Galop infernal*, “C’est bal et original,” danced by Juno. At first Jupiter’s attempt to run off with Eurydice fails, but after he tricks Orpheus into looking back while exiting from Hades, he then transforms Eurydice into a priestess.<sup>344</sup>

The love triangle involving the married Orpheus and Eurydice and Jupiter, as well as the general eroticism captivated Mexican audiences, and helped *Los Doses del Olimpo*, Offenbach, and the can-can “reign like despots” over Mexican society. Altamirano described the dancers as the “missionaries of [this] civilization,” who only have fun and corrupt their audiences. As “missionaries” they also represented debates about the current and future status of Mexico as a “European,” “civilized” and “moral” state, and its demoralized and

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<sup>343</sup> “Todas las preocupaciones y vicios que aquejan al viejo mundo.” Ignacio Altamirano, “Revista de la Semana,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 9 October 1870.

<sup>344</sup> Andrew Lamb, “Orphée aux enfers,” *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O004618> (accessed 14 March 2010).

suffering population.<sup>345</sup> Despite this threat, Mexican spectators asked for more arrangements of Offenbach, but Gaztambide had only brought *Los Dioses del Olimpo*. After a very successful season, he and his company left for Puebla in September of 1869.

Gómez traveled with the company to Puebla, but returned to Mexico City on her own in November, after the season ended in Puebla. Her return to the stage in Mexico City as a “cancanera” initiated a polemic against the can-can among critics, especially Ignacio Altamirano and Baron Gostkowski. At the height of the can-can, in the 1870s, the audience separated into two factions, the “calaveras” (libertines) who enjoyed watching the can-can and did not think it could harm Mexican society, and the “tormentistas” (tormentors) who taunted the performers of the can-can because they considered it offensive and thought it promoted immorality.<sup>346</sup> Interpretation of the reception of Gómez and the can-can therefore provides a window into wider implications of such criticism for the perception of French culture, morality, and gender differences in Mexico.

The gender dynamics of a can-can performance and its reception were unique within the theatrical world of Mexico City. Women regularly attended performances of other types of zarzuelas and operas—opera was considered acceptable entertainment for women and zarzuelas were family entertainment. The audience for “zarzuelas bufas” and “zarzuelas cancaneras,” however, was mostly male. The male-authored reviews of the can-can therefore represented a male-centric perspective on the can-can. In this context the focus in can-can reception on the female dancers’ body movements could be seen as objectifying the female form, but could also be empowering for women. Ignacio Altamirano stated in *El Siglo Diez y*

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<sup>345</sup> Ignacio Altamirano, “Crónica de la Semana,” *El Renacimiento*, 31 July 1869.

<sup>346</sup> Ramos Smith, *Teatro Musical*, 101.

*Nueve*, “the dancers will be sublime from shamelessness and delirium... the mimes will reveal in their contortions all the mysteries of the continent.”<sup>347</sup> The dancers’ bodies not only symbolize personal choices, shamelessness, and emotional states, such as delirium, but are ascribed additional power, that of revealing the world’s mysteries to the male audience. Despite his critiques of the dancers’ “contortions,” Altamirano also empowers the women by emphasizing (sarcastically) how audiences look at them as though they could reveal secrets of the world, particularly the European “continent.” By using the can-can to create a dialogue about continued foreign influence, as well as women’s roles in Mexican society, some reviewers helped can-can dancers like Amalia Gómez to turn their performances into cultural and political statements, rather than only objectifying physical displays.<sup>348</sup> While the mostly male audience members may have viewed the can-can solely as a sensual display of the female body, critics helped to reframe the dancers as participants in a larger discourse concerning personal and cultural identity in Mexico.

The criticism directed at Offenbach’s “immoral” French works served to further emphasize the perception of the can-can as harmful to Mexican society. Altamirano, like many Mexicans, considered Offenbach’s music, however deplorable, among the “great musical works” of Europe because of its effect on audiences. Altamirano lamented that, among the great stage works imported from France and Europe, only Offenbach’s works

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<sup>347</sup> “Las bailarinas van á estar sublimes de desvergüenza y delirio... los mimos revelarán en sus contorsiones todos los misterios de la continencia.” Ignacio Altamirano, “Revista de la Semana,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 9 October 1870.

<sup>348</sup> Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), 274.

were able to fill theaters in Mexico City.<sup>349</sup> In this context, *Los dioses del Olimpo* and the can-can therefore represent the most popular musical imports from Europe. In August of 1869, Altamirano stated in *El Renacimiento* that “There is something reproachable and insulting in the pieces of Offenbach, something disdainful and humiliating, something that subverts the moral order, is the sedition against the traditions of modesty and respect.”<sup>350</sup> If Offenbach’s music was so offensive, then the dancers who made it more famous became “missionaries” of the French genre, and of its subversion of the moral order. Thus, writings on Offenbach’s music and the can-can highlight how French influence in Mexican culture inscribed both musical performances and the gendered body with notions of immorality, arrogance, and disrespect.

If the can-can was so immoral, what did this mean for the taste of Mexican audiences? The can-can may not have tempted female spectators to indulge in unceremonious behavior, but the large demand for the can-can reflected the perceived decline of morality in Mexican society. Altamirano stated sarcastically, “Oh, miracle of the regeneration of taste! When this abhorrent dance appeared on the scene, it received immense applause and bravos, with an indescribable delirium, with an intoxication that would have killed Rigolboche herself from excitement.”<sup>351</sup> The primarily male audiences received a tasteless dance with applause, bravos, as if intoxicated by its power. For Altamirano then, the

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<sup>349</sup> Ignacio Altamirano, “Revista de la Semana,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 9 October 1870.

<sup>350</sup> “Hay algo de reproche y de insulto en las piezas de Offenbach, algo de aoberanamente despreciativo y humillante, algo que subvierte el orden moral, es la sedicion contra las tradiciones del pudor y del respeto.” Ignacio Altamirano, *El Renacimiento*, 17 July 1869.

<sup>351</sup> “¡Oh milagro de la regeneración del gusto! Al aparecer en la escena el antes aborrecido baile, ha sido recibido con una salva inmensa de aplausos y de bravos, con un delirio indescribable, con una embriaguez que habría matado de emoción a Rigolboche misma.” Ignacio Altamirano, *El Renacimiento*, 3 July 1869.

favorable reception of the can-can represented a degeneration of taste, which he found very troubling. Perhaps because of the value of women's role in representing modesty and educating men in morality, Altamirano could not understand why Mexican spectators chose to support such a vulgar display of wild sensuality.

In response to Altamirano's criticisms writers such as J.M. del Castillo Velasco defended the taste of Mexican audiences, though not the character of Offenbach's music or the can-can. In *El Monitor Republicano* del Castillo Velasco admits that Altamirano is right to hate the can-can and to fight its spreading popularity. Despite this shared disapproval, del Castillo Velasco takes offense at Altamirano's castigation of the Mexican audience for wanting to watch zarzuelas and can-cans. He argues that Mexicans are drawn to works such as *Los dioses del Olimpo* because "The people suffer, in the country they are hungry, they cry, and they cannot resist the political and social situations, yet." When attending zarzuela and zarzuela bufa performances, "the people laugh, and while they laugh they forget their pain and suffering... These people are not happy: here you have the reason why they prefer the can-can and the zarzuela to drama and comedy."<sup>352</sup> Del Castillo Velasco blames the demand for can-can on the difficulties endured by most Mexicans—they need something to distract them from the troubles in their lives. Thus, the can-can dancer's body is also inscribed by beliefs and sentiments related to the difficult conditions of contemporary Mexican society.

The dancers' bodies communicated contradictory conceptions of femininity and sexuality, as well as gendered power structures that challenged women's typical role in

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<sup>352</sup> "En la zarzuela el pueblo rie, mientras rie olvida sus Dolores y sus tormentas... Este pueblo no es feliz: ahí tiene ud. la razón por la que prefiere el *can can* y la *zarzuela* al drama y la comedia." J.M. del Castillo Velasco, "El Teatro: Al Sr. D. Ignacio Altamirano," *El Monitor Republicano*, 31 August 1869.

Mexico City society. The character of cancaneras' movements and their intoxicating power posed a danger to the traditional gender expectations of Mexican society. Altamirano constructed the dancer's body as capable of causing uncontrollable responses from the audience and dangerous to the self-identification of young women. In a review of the premiere of *Los dioses del Olimpo*, Altamirano recounts how the audience faced the potential transformative power of the dancing female body. In describing the audience's reaction to Gómez, he stated, "With one more, with one contortion more, the electrified public would have left their seats, would have run to the stage, and would have run through the streets in triumph."<sup>353</sup> Gómez's "contortions" captivated the audience to the extent that they almost lost control of their own bodies. According to his construction of the female body, her movements could infect others, causing them to emulate her unregulated behavior.

The can-can also impacted how Mexican women were instructed about their bodies. In a story about an older woman's reaction to the can-can, Altamirano argued that the gestures of the can-can dancer could have a far more deleterious impact on Mexican women as a whole. Because of older women's reactions to young girls' interest in the can-can, "we have a young womanhood who seem like a legion of strict religious devotees. What horror! The old women will turn good Mexican society into a nunnery."<sup>354</sup> The response of "old" Mexican women responsible for guiding the young to the can-can could result in backlash against anything new, even true progress. The further restriction of women's activities would

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<sup>353</sup> "A poco más, con una contorsión más, el público electrizado habría dejado los asientos, habría corrido al proscenio y la habría paseado en triunfo por las calles." Ignacio Altamirano, *El Renacimiento*, 3 July 1869.

<sup>354</sup> "Tenemos en México una juventud femenina que parece a una legion de recoletas. ¡qué horror! Las viejas convertirían á la buena sociedad Mexicana en un beaterio." Ignacio Altamirano, "Crónica de la Semana," *El Renacimiento*, 10 July 1869.

result in a closed-off society, similar to a nunnery, in which the women could not take advantage of new opportunities and freedoms, such as those in the arenas of education and work. This posed yet another threat to the Mexicans' conception of progress, and the goals of European modernity.

As seen in Altamirano's reviews, the can-can dancer's body signaled that not all progress was needed. In his view, such symbols of moral regression needed to be removed or cured, like a diseased appendage or illness. Within these analogies, can-can dancers represented ill health, rather than models of good health, and therefore threatened the dominant conception of the ideal woman's bodily condition. In an early diatribe against the can-can, Altamirano described the audiences' enthusiastic reception of dancers as evidence of a "can-can virus." Dancers, through their movements, spread the virus to more and more Mexican spectators. He does not offer ideas for remedies, but reiterates that it epitomizes bad taste, and therefore must be stopped.<sup>355</sup> Such comparisons were common in Altamirano's writings. In a separate review he referred to "cancanomanía" as "a gangrenous pustule impossible to cure."<sup>356</sup> The can-can dancers, as the cause of the mania, represented the gangrene, while the persistent pustule signified the never-ending demand for the can-can, despite efforts to interest them in other performances.

According to Altamirano, the spread of the "can-can virus" also reflected new approaches to rules and regulations governing appropriate dress. Most upper-class Mexican women wore long gowns with restrictive corsets, crinolines and bustles, in the European

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<sup>355</sup> He remarked in *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* that some were "inoculated against the can-can virus," immune to the allure of the dancers (9 October 1870).

<sup>356</sup> "La cancanomanía es una pústula gangrenosa de imposible curacion." Ignacio Altamirano, *El Renacimiento*, 7 August 1869.

style.<sup>357</sup> This feminine praxis represented an ideal of femininity.<sup>358</sup> Altamirano noted with disgust that can-can dancers, such as Amalia Gómez, seemed to obey different rules of dress and allowed their bodies to move in more extreme ways. He was especially bothered by the seeming leniency among can-can dancers concerning the appropriate length of their skirts and other elements of fashion that might restrict their signature movements, high kicks.<sup>359</sup>

In an article about the continued popularity of the can-can in 1870, Altamirano describes a typical can-can performance, in which “the dancers will be sublimated from nerve and delirium, their skirts will rise up to their necks...”<sup>360</sup> While other women of high social standing and public visibility wear appropriate dresses, the cancaneras not only wear shorter skirts, but also raise them during high kicks “up to their necks.” In the same piece, he expresses worry about the repercussions of the dancers’ display—could these alternative regulations of the body spread to other segments of the population? As the can-can gained in popularity among serious men, women of a marriageable age, and children, not only did they

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<sup>357</sup> Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico*, 56.

<sup>358</sup> Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, 182.

<sup>359</sup> Many scholars have addressed the relationships between fashion and gender, including the rise of Parisian fashion in the nineteenth century. For example, see Malcolm Barnard, *Fashion As Communication* (London: Routledge Publishers, 1996); Diana Crane, *Fashion and its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Susan Hiner, *Accessories to Modernity: Fashion and the Feminine in Nineteenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Valerie Steele, *Fashion and Eroticism: Ideals of Feminine Beauty from the Victorian Age to the Jazz Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); and Susan J. Vincent, *The Anatomy of Fashion: Dressing the Body from the Renaissance to Today* (Oxford: Berg, 2009).

<sup>360</sup> “Las bailarinas van á estar sublimes de desvergüenza y de delirio, las faldas subirán hasta el cuello.” Ignacio Altamirano, “Revista de la Semana,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 9 October 1870.



begin to accept Offenbach's music, but "today the skirts and knees are rising, too."<sup>361</sup>

The norm for women's dress was already being threatened by the influence of a new conception of the body. The cancaneras' moving bodies empowered women by challenging the more restrictive norm of dress and behavior in Mexico City, while still representing a (hyper)-sexualized female body, to the enjoyment of male audiences. Therefore, the biggest threat the regulations of dress and behavior posed was for young, impressionable Mexican women. In earlier reviews, Altamirano seemed sure that Mexican women would remain pure and modest, but, as Bordo notes, the conceptions and uses of the body are always morphing. Those who once seemed "inoculated against" the influence of the can-can now seemed to fall prey to its alluring alternative regulations governing the conceptions of the female body.

The reception of Amalia Gómez and the cancaneras in Mexico City, primarily by Ignacio Altamirano, reveals a many-layered discourse that serves to construct the dancers' bodies as alternative, intoxicating, and threatening to the norms of gender structures and expectations in Mexican society. Their association with the danger of French influence and the difficult conditions experienced by many Mexicans illustrate how the dancers' bodies were inscribed by both cultures on the operatic stage.

Altamirano's discussion of the power of cancaneras' bodily exertions communicated the unacceptable nature of female authority and sexuality in the broader context of gendered expectations in Mexico. By using medical analogies to depict the can-can as diseases and its dancers as the infectors, Altamirano furthered his claim that the can-can and its dancers did not fit within his conception of women's gender norms, and posed a threat to the health of Mexican society, particularly Mexican women of good character. The constructs of the body

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<sup>361</sup> "Hoy se alza también el vestido y la pierna." Ignacio Altamirano, "Revista de la Semana," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 9 October 1870.

in culture help to contextualize Altamirano's criticism of the can-can and its dancers within femininity, sexuality, and women's power in late nineteenth-century Mexico City.

### **Angela Peralta: The Fetishized Voice of a Nation**

“Overcoming all kinds of obstacles, fighting bravely against all adversities, she has placed her name and that of her beautiful country so high.”<sup>362</sup>

While pursuing her career as an opera singer, impresario, and composer, Angela Peralta de Castera overcame obstacles based on her racial background and gender, such as stereotypes of indigenous women and restrictive conceptions of women's roles and femininity in Mexican society. Even though her professional choices flouted many expectations of a “civilized” and feminine woman, as demonstrated in the critical reception of her as a singer and her compositional style Peralta became a crucial symbol to Mexican critics of the honor and religious purity of Mexican women. The femininity attributed to Peralta's voice, as well as the visual presentation and musical qualities of her compositions helped critics to frame her as an example of a good Mexican woman. Their writings served to distract readers from her ambition and her physical appearance, which seemed to reflect her indigenous heritage; neither was consistent with dominant conceptions of femininity. This manipulation of Peralta's public image framed her as a decent woman in contrast to the increasingly visible disreputable women, such as prostitutes and *chinas poblanas*, or *mestizas* associated with a particular type of dress and overt sexuality. Through her public image and personal choices, Peralta performed the interconnected relationships between racial and

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<sup>362</sup> “Venciendo toda clase de obstáculos, luchando valiente en contra de todas las adversidades, ha llegado á colocar tan alto su nombre y el de la patria hermosa.” Javier Santa María, *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 17 November 1872.

gender norms in late nineteenth-century Mexico City.

Peralta's public image as a model of "civilized" Mexican femininity was not consistent with many of her personal and professional choices. Her public and personal profiles resulted in a conflicted relationship between her position as a Mexican woman and her image as an accomplished musician in Mexico and Europe. Peralta was considered "civilized" because of her connections to high art, as a singer of Italian opera, as well as her successes as a singer throughout Europe. And, through her voice, critics said that Peralta exuded appropriate feminine characteristics, such as modesty and purity.

When one considers her career more closely, however, she appears to challenge these expectations rather than exemplify femininity. She pursued a public career as an opera performer, an opera impresario, and a composer of parlor music at a time when women were expected to stay in the home and support their husbands.<sup>363</sup> As others turned to Italy and France for the latest in opera styles and trends, Peralta advocated the development of Mexican operas by performing in premieres of works by Mexican composers Melesio Morales and Aniceto Ortega. Instead of focusing on the ways in which Peralta and her choices remained inconsistent with societal expectations, critics based their descriptions of her character on the one indisputably feminine and beautiful element of her career and physicality—her voice.

My analysis of the fetishization of her voice and the impact of Peralta's published compositions on her image relies primarily on the discourses of civilized behavior and mestizaje in late nineteenth-century Mexico (see chapter two). While visual cues remained the primary way to discern racial heritage, one's racial background played a less important

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<sup>363</sup> Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico*, 47.

role in one's status—behavior, fashion, political or economic status, and education became important evidence of a “civilized” person in Mexican society.

As an ambitious woman of indigenous heritage, critics could have discriminated against Peralta because of her skin color, or her unattractive features and lack of modesty.<sup>364</sup> They instead ignored her physical appearance and painted her as a paragon of proper character and Mexican femininity. Why did they choose to portray Peralta in this way? The answer is two-fold. First, critics were uncomfortable with her physicality because of what it might signify—a truly integrated indigenous woman who challenged prevalent conceptions of beauty, and who surpassed the successes of her lighter-skinned counterparts. Second, Peralta could only illustrate the continued reputable character of Mexican women through her voice, which signified appropriate sweetness, purity, and religious morality.

The image of a “civilized” and feminine Peralta was further supported by the reception and both the visual and musical qualities of her published compositions. The engraved images on the covers show upper-class women in the “woman’s sphere” of the home, and the music consists of pieces for voice and piano like those typical of salon gatherings, an acceptable venue for women. Peralta’s importance, therefore, was her ability to challenge expectations based on race and gender, while remaining a symbol of the honor of Mexican women.

In creating an image of Peralta as “civilized” and feminine, Mexican critics and music publishers emphasized her status as a successful singer in Europe, who also remained closely connected to her homeland, Mexico. Despite audiences’ great appreciation for her abroad,

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<sup>364</sup> Unlike other singers deemed less-than-attractive, such as Pauline Viardot (1821–1910), most writings that describe in detail Peralta’s physical appearance did not appear until after her death.

the Mexican people stayed her most devoted admirers. In the 10 September 1871 issue of *El Monitor Republicano*, T.S. y R. remarked on Peralta's reputation in Europe: "All love you: they call you a nightingale in Europe, in the distant land ..."<sup>365</sup> Opera audiences in Europe and other far-away places, "loved" Peralta, and said that she sang like a nightingale. Peralta established herself as a star of Italian operas in Mexico and in Europe.<sup>366</sup> Gerardo M. Silva further substantiated Peralta's connection to the land of proper taste in a 17 November 1872 article about the installment of a bust of Peralta in Mexico City's Gran Teatro Nacional. "The heaven of Europe has constellated her path; that blessed land that has devoured so many generations and has given rise to so many ideas, has placed in front of her its most beautiful flowers."<sup>367</sup> The elevated status of Europe is confirmed by calling it "heaven," and because of Peralta's successes there she now walks on a path of stars, constellations. Silva defends Europe as a model of the "old world," an ideal of established civilization, whose history includes many generations and important ideas. Peralta's own prestige in this "heaven" is affirmed, as Europeans honored her with their "most beautiful" laurels.

Despite her triumphs in Europe, Peralta would always first and foremost be Mexican, a "civilized" Mexican. In a poem from the 7 September 1871 issue of *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* Alberto Bianchi encourages Peralta to be proud of her Mexican origins, and possibly her indigenous heritage. "After your glory, say in your song to the Old World: I AM A

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<sup>365</sup> "Todos le admiran: rui señor te llaman allá en Europa, en el lejano suelo; Es débil espresion: los que te ama, te dan el nombre de querub del cielo." T.S. y R., *El Monitor Republicano*, 10 September 1871.

<sup>366</sup> See for example, reviews in the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, 18 May 1862; *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano*, 1 June 1862; and *La Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, 1 May 1870.

<sup>367</sup> "El cielo de Europa se ha constelado á su paso; aquella tierra bendita que ha devorado á tantas generaciones y ha animado á tantas ideas, ha colocado sobre su frente sus flores mas hermosas." Gerardo M. Silva, *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 17 November 1872.

MEXICAN WOMAN [sic], ‘I get my inspiration from Anáhuac.’”<sup>368</sup> When Peralta is in Europe, the “Old World,” she should make it known that she is Mexican, and her artistic inspiration comes from “Anáhuac,” the ancient Aztec name for the Valley of Mexico (where Mexico City is located). The reference to “Anáhuac” could imply knowledge of her indigenous blood, though this is not likely. It was fairly common for poets to refer to the Valley of Mexico as “Anáhuac” in writings about Mexican pride, with a wide variety of subjects.<sup>369</sup> Through her singing she can raise the reputation of Mexican women, and Mexico as a whole, in Europe.

J.M. Vigil echoed the praise of Peralta’s Mexican-ness, but focused on her reputation in her home country. In the 10 September issue of *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* Vigil stated, “You are welcome, sublime artist, of Mexico’s glory and honor... You are welcome: your excellent fame already brought us your name.”<sup>370</sup> Peralta’s reputation, her “glory and honor” was formed at least in part by her strong relationship with her homeland of Mexico. And, by the time she became known in Europe, her “excellent fame” was already celebrated in Mexico. Again, her gifts were first noted and admired in Mexico, which helped to form and nurture her career. The combination of success in “civilized” and “heavenly” Europe and pride in her Mexican origins made Peralta a paragon of Mexican culture.

Reviews of Peralta’s performances in Mexico City were overwhelmingly positive.

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<sup>368</sup> “En pos de gloria, dí en tu cancion al Viejo Mundo: SOY MEXICANA [sic], “de Anáhuac tengo la inspiracion.” Alberto Bianchi, “Á Angela Peralta,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 7 September 1871.

<sup>369</sup> See, for example, poetry about composer Melesio Morales, and writings by Justo Sierra and Antonio García Cubas.

<sup>370</sup> “Bien vengas, sublime artista, de México prez y honor... Bien vengas: tu excelsa fama nos trajo tu nombre ya.” J.M. Vigil, “Á Angela Peralta,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 10 September 1871.

After a December 1877 performance of *Lucía* (by Peralta's own opera company), a critic noted how she moved the audience with her interpretation: "Mrs. Peralta interpreted the protagonist as we never seen her, and that is a lot to say, in the aria of delirium, and was the recipient of a deserved ovation."<sup>371</sup> Peralta usually received great acclaim, so a successful performance was expected. In her portrayal of *Lucía* in the "Mad Scene" Peralta surpassed even the usual high quality of her portrayals.

In a more detailed review of an earlier performance of *Lucía* (May of 1871), a critic in *El Federalista* explained the allure of Peralta's vocal resonance. He compared her voice to the "smooth running of the stream," and to the "song of a solitary bird in the middle of the night." It ended with the following statement: "We will never tire of repeating it: Angela Peralta designates honor, the most fair and legitimate with which we can present before the musical world, full of our homeland's pride."<sup>372</sup> Her voice was both smooth as a murmuring stream and as sweet and clear as the call of a bird in the silence of the night. This critic continued to sing Peralta's praises, as the "most fair and legitimate" musical success Mexico could offer to the rest of the world.

While Mexico City newspapers reprinted positive reviews from Europe and the United States, other reviews tell a different story. Peralta traveled to New York in 1867 in order to sing in concerts and fully-staged operas organized by impresario Max Maretzek. As one New York reviewer stated, "The manly youth of Mexico is all fire and flame in its

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<sup>371</sup> "La Sra. Peralta interpretó como nunca, y es mucho decir, á la protagonista, en la aria del delirio, y fué objeto de una ovacion merecida." "Teatro Nacional," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 7 December 1877.

<sup>372</sup> "El suave rumor del arroyo...como el canto del ave solitaria en medio del silencio de la noche...No nos cansaremos de repetirlo: Angela Peralta es un título, el mas justo y legítimo con que nos podemos presentar ante el mundo musical, llenos de orgullo patrio." "Angela Peralta," *El Federalista*, 29 May 1871; reprinted in *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 30 May 1871.

devotion to the Diva, and any doubt as to her beauty and talent is promptly rewarded with a stab from a dagger. In spite of all this, however, one or two cold-blooded critics have let it creep [sic] out that La Peralta is a mere mediocrity.” The review illustrates that Peralta embodied national pride for her Mexican compatriots, and that this resulted in fear of retribution in the United States should any critics tell the “truth” about Peralta’s mediocre appearance and vocal performances.

On 19 October 1867, after her performances of *Barbiere di Sicilia* by Rossini and *I puritani* by Bellini, the critics in *The Round Table* stated, “She has not the least discrimination, but sings everything alike, Elvira’s madness and Rosina’s coquetry; not only cannot act, but has no look of distinction.” In her portrayal of characters in the Rossini and Bellini operas, Peralta did not seem aware of the different artistic approaches required to demonstrate the differences between, for example, the elder Elvira’s insanity and the youthful Rosina’s playfulness. The critic therefore concluded that Peralta is incapable of acting. Not only did her performance suffer because of her apparent lack of dramatic talent, but also because Peralta’s appearance was not distinctly beautiful or otherwise noticeable, which is a scathing criticism, given the attention paid to her physicality as a performer on the stage.

Musicians in New York, such as Minnie Hauk, also echoed assertions of Peralta’s lack of beauty and musical talent. In her memoirs, Hauk described the sequence of events that led to her first performance in a major role as part of Max Maretzek’s troupe. When Maretzek engaged Peralta as “Juliet” in Bellini’s *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (1830), Hauk immediately deemed her inappropriate for the role: “Alas, she was of ponderous stature, and



physically unfit to represent any such youthful character on the stage.”<sup>373</sup> Peralta’s short stature and unseemly and/or aged appearance did not convey the “correct” visual image of the very young and beautiful. Juliet Hauk’s criticism of Peralta continued, now focused on her lack of musicality: “She was very slow in learning; weeks and months had passed and as yet she had not mastered the part of Juliet. It came to light, accidentally, that she was quite unmusical and that her parts had to be drummed into her by continual repetitions of the melodies on the piano.”<sup>374</sup>

Peralta did eventually lose the part to Hauk, who obtained her New York debut as Juliet. What is clear is that Peralta’s reception in Mexico differed from that in New York, and especially concerning her physical appearance and musical talent. While in New York, both singers and reviewers did not shy from mentioning Peralta’s less-than-spectacularly beautiful physicality. In Mexico her appearance is rarely mentioned, and even then only in the context of the historical accuracy of her Aztec costume.<sup>375</sup> Instead, Mexican writers and critics created their own image of Peralta, dependent on her voice’s aural qualities and their concern for the reputation of Mexican womanhood.

After her death descriptions of Peralta’s physical appearance were more critical of her features in terms of expectations of beauty. In 1937, when Peralta’s body was moved to its final resting place at the Rotunda de Hombres Ilustres (Rotunda of Illustrious Men) in Mexico City, both American writer Bess Adams Garner and Mexican writer Artemio del Valle Arizpe remarked on Peralta’s face and figure. Garner stated, “She was one of the

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<sup>373</sup> Minnie Hauk, *Memories of a Singer*, ed. Andrew Farkas (London: Arno Press, 1977; reprint London: A.M. Philpot, 1925), 36.

<sup>374</sup> Hauk, *Memories of a Singer*, 36-37.

<sup>375</sup> See Chapter 3.

greatest the Teatro Principal ever knew. She was not at all beautiful and her face was badly pockmarked, but she had a marvelous, natural skylark voice.”<sup>376</sup> Peralta possessed natural talent for singing, but her body and especially her flawed skin did not match her voice. Garner gives specific reasons for this: Peralta’s face was heavily scarred from acne, and the rest of her was “not at all beautiful” (see Figure 4-2). If critics had acknowledged such a dichotomy between her voice and physicality during her lifetime, it could have undermined both her reputation at home and abroad as an acceptable and proper emissary of Mexican culture.



**FIGURE 4-2: Picture of Angela Peralta.** “Portraits of rulers, politicians... relating to the reign of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico,” Photo Collection, Library of Congress, 43.

Mexican writer Valle Arizpe wrote an even more inflammatory description of Peralta in his account of the history of Mexico City, again drawing upon contrasts between her appearance and her voice: “She was the stocky Mexican diva, fat, [skin] of an indigenous brown, with bulging eyes that squint, but with an extraordinary voice... the poor woman

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<sup>376</sup> Bess Adams Garner, *Mexico: Notes in the Margin* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1937), 87.

suffered from an imposing ugliness...<sup>377</sup> As seen in reviews of Carolina Civili, critics valued pale skin and fine features. Instead, Peralta had “indigenous brown” skin, which did not meet expectations of whitened skin valued in the ideology of *mestizaje*. Her large, protruding eyes helped to place her further outside the realm of the beautiful. Peralta’s skin and features combined into an overall “imposing ugliness” from which nevertheless emanated her “extraordinary” voice.

Mexico City critics depicted Peralta as a model of femininity because of her voice’s sweetness, angelic character, sentimentality, and association with religious devotion.<sup>378</sup> In the context of the legalization of prostitution and the foreign fascination with the *china poblana*, Peralta’s voice exemplified a different kind of Mexican woman, one who embodied a respectable feminine woman, graceful, tender, sweet, and pure. In addition, as a result of the divine “purity” of her voice, Peralta acquired religious significance as an “angelic” woman who inspired religious devotion. Mexican women were expected to be guardians of morality and purity, and as such were often elevated to a pedestal as angelic, ethereal creatures.<sup>379</sup> In addition, as part of helping to “form the souls” of her family she also was expected to move others to remain committed to religion and morality.<sup>380</sup> Despite her perceived

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<sup>377</sup> “Era la diva mexicana achaparrada, gorda, de un moreno indígena, con ojos saltones de mirar estrábico, pero con una voz extraordinaria... era la pobre señora de una fealdad imponente...” Artemio de Valle-Arizpe, *Por la Vieja Calzada de Tlacopan*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 1980), 337.

<sup>378</sup> As characteristics expected of Mexican women, see Vivian M. Vallens, *Working Women in Mexico During the Porfiriato, 1880–1910* (San Francisco: R&E Research Associates, Inc., 1978), 5

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>380</sup> Jean Franco, *Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 81–82.

unattractiveness and career in the public sphere, Peralta became a model of “femininity” in contrast to other female figures who threatened to undermine the integrity of Mexican womanhood.

Poetry dedicated to Peralta particularly focused on the “feminine” traits of her voice. In his poem Juan D. de Peza did not examine Peralta’s physical attributes or his impression of their relationship to societal norms. Instead, he described the positive aural impact of her voice: “It was your voice that sounding full of grace and tenderness instills love and luck...”<sup>381</sup> Peza’s poem also supports the “feminine” image of Peralta: as Vivian Vallens illustrates in her book on women in the Porfiriato, the “grace” and “tenderness” ascribed to Peralta’s voice here helped to characterize the ideal Mexican woman.<sup>382</sup>

Peralta’s voice also expressed sweetness and the effort to please those around her. In a poem from 1872, an unknown author focused on the sound of her voice: “Sweet is your accent, sweeter your trill, your song sublime, indescribably pleasing.”<sup>383</sup> The way in which Peralta pronounced words when singing, her “accent,” was sweet, and her use of trills to ornament melodies was even sweeter. The complete sound of her voice reflected the “pleasing nature” expected of a Mexican woman, especially in her relationship with her husband.<sup>384</sup> Peralta not only exhibited feminine qualities, but also demonstrated how women

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<sup>381</sup> “Era tu voz, que sonando llena de gracia y ternura infunde amor y ventura...” Juan de D. Peza “A la Eminent Artista Angela Peralta de Castera,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 17 November 1872.

<sup>382</sup> Vallens, *Working Women*, 5.

<sup>383</sup> “Dulce es tu acento, mas dulce tu trino, tu canto sublime, inefable placer.” “A la eminente cantatriz, honor y Gloria de México, la Sra. Angela Peralta de Castera,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 9 September 1872.

<sup>384</sup> José Maria S., “Advice from a father to his daughter,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 7 September

should act in relation to others.

Modesty and purity represented two of the most valued elements of the feminine character of Mexican women.<sup>385</sup> In order to remain respectable, a woman had to maintain a reputation of humility and piety. Modesty was expected to be a woman's greatest adornment.<sup>386</sup> In another poem Manuel Estrada wrote of the image her voice conjured for him: "I think of you in the middle of the stage calm, nice, gracious, like the white and modest lily."<sup>387</sup> The use of the image of a white lily was a common symbol of the Virgin Mary, and therefore represented purity and chastity.<sup>388</sup> What is particularly interesting about this description of the impact of her voice is its focus on Peralta as a singer "in the middle of the stage," rather than in a locale more consistent with the dominant perception of a woman's sphere, the home.<sup>389</sup> Instead, Estrada shows that Peralta could remain "gracious," "modest," and pure while on stage, through the sound of her voice. Peralta therefore, despite her physical appearance and her public career, remained a feminine icon of tenderness, grace, sweetness, purity, and modesty. Through Peralta, the religious morality of Mexican women was translated into a new space, making the stage an acceptable venue for Peralta to perform.

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1869.

<sup>385</sup> Ramos Smith, *Teatro Musical*, 48.

<sup>386</sup> Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico*, 74.

<sup>387</sup> "Yo te contemplo en medio de la escena apacible, simpatico, graciosa, como la blanca y púdica azucena." Sr. D. Manuel Estrada, "A la eminente y distinguida artista Angela Peralta." *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 7 Sept 1871.

<sup>388</sup> Elizabeth N.C. Zarur, "Catalogue Raisonné: Retablos," in *Art and faith in Mexico: the nineteenth-century retablo tradition*, ed. Elizabeth N.C. Zarur, Calil Zarur, Charles Muir Lovell, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 313.

<sup>389</sup> Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico*, 49.

As seen in descriptions of her voice and its aesthetic and personal impact, Peralta, in effect, became the “guardian angel” of the stage, helping to redefine its purpose and perceived impact on Mexican society.

Agustín F. Cuenca, a famous Mexican writer of the late nineteenth century, portrayed Peralta as an angel in his poem, “A Angela Peralta.” “With the pomp of an angel your song constellates, lyre of your soul the emotion of an angel.”<sup>390</sup> Cuenca compared Peralta’s performance to the splendid display of angels in heaven, and her singing, or “song” further supports this comparison, as it leaves a trail of beautiful, shining stars in its celestial path. Peralta’s voice, the “lyre of [her] soul,” also illustrates her emotional depth and purity, associated with angels. Peralta’s “angelic” song reflected the true nature of her soul. Through her performances on the public stage, Peralta exemplified the religious purity and warmth of feeling expected of women, and the honorable character of angels, thus helping to create a new meaning for the stage and its performers. Perhaps public careers need not be seen as threatening to patriarchal structures, but rather as another opportunity to express one’s femininity and closeness to moral reform as seen through the religious ideal of the angel and the Virgin Mary.<sup>391</sup>

In a poem from September of 1872, “M.I” provided further insight into the religious significance of Peralta’s voice. Not only did her voice reveal her “angelic” character, but it also inspired the audience to understand the important spiritual ideals of Christianity, such as the divine realm and the soul’s ascent to heaven. He described Peralta’s voice as the

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<sup>390</sup> “Con pompa de ángel tu cancion constela, lira de tu alma la emocion del ángel.” A. F. Cuenca, “A Angela Peralta,” *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 7 Sept 1871.

<sup>391</sup> French, “Prostitutes,” 531, 533; Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico*, 50.

“celestial song” of a lark that “comes to make us understand heaven.”<sup>392</sup> Peralta’s voice, like the bird’s song, inspired listeners to better grasp the idea and reality of the Divine. By associating Peralta with a divine home, the author created an analogy between the Mexican woman “forming souls” at home, and Peralta’s ability to help in the moral education of her audience by helping them to achieve closeness to heaven. Again, the poet transformed the opera stage into an acceptable place for women, as long as they continue to perform their expected societal roles.

Newspaper columnist Enrique Chavarri described in greater detail the powers of Peralta’s voice to move listeners to religious devotion. In a poem from the 10 September 1871 issue of *El Monitor Republicano* he stated, “The celestial cadences of your trill, the sweet melodies of your throat cause us to dream about the Divine.”<sup>393</sup> He deemed Peralta’s vocal trills heavenly or even holy, in the context of the overall “sweet” quality of her voice. Most important was the impact of Peralta’s “celestial” singing: while listening the audience would be drawn to contemplate the “Divine.” Peralta’s singing helped her audience to focus on the discourse of the Church, its values of morality, and allowed her public performance to reflect the importance of women in helping their families to uphold these virtues.<sup>394</sup>

Peralta’s relationship to expectations of women in Mexican society was problematic in many ways, and involved not only her appearance and singing career, but also her role as impresario of an Italian opera company and as a composer. While little is known of her

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<sup>392</sup> “Que viene á hacernos comprender el cielo.” (M.I.), *El Siglo Diezy Nueve*, 7 August 1872.

<sup>393</sup> “Las célicas cadencias de tu trino, las dulces melodías de tu garganta nos llevan a soñar en lo divino.” Juvenal (Enrique Chavarri), “A Angela Peralta,” *El Monitor Republicano*, 10 September 1871.

<sup>394</sup> Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico*, 74.

decisions as head of an opera company, published versions of Peralta's compositions and records of performances remain. These published works (1875) consist of songs and pieces for solo piano typical of works to be performed at a salon. Both the lithograph covers of the individual songs and dances, as well as their musical styles served to further cement Peralta's position as a respectable Mexican woman by conforming to expectations for women to remain in the private sphere, and by demonstrating appropriate behavior and dress for women. For example, in reviews of performances of her works, critics paid most attention not to Peralta's talent as a composer, but to other aspects from the performers or the audience, and even to her feminine reaction to the applause (she supposedly fainted). And, the images on the covers of the pieces depict upper-class women in a variety of scenes in the home, such as ornate gardens and the drawing room. Therefore, the music, images, and reception supported the public image of Peralta constructed by critics and other writers, that of an exemplary Mexican woman, even though it was not common for women to be known as composers in late nineteenth-century Mexico.

Parlor songs and piano pieces help to represent the nineteenth-century conception of separate gender spheres, public (men) vs. private (women), in which women were expected to remain at home as caretakers and muses.<sup>395</sup> As part of their preparation for marriage and courtship, women were taught to play feminine instruments, such as the piano, and to sing, in order to attract suitors in the home. Such salon gatherings with musical performances were popular in Mexico City, and occurred on days when the theaters were closed, often before

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<sup>395</sup> Petra Meyer-Frazier, "Music, Novels and Women: Nineteenth-Century Prescriptions for an Ideal Life," *Women & Music* (2006): 47.



dances.<sup>396</sup> At a salon a woman could display her attributes and talents and hope a potential admirer might notice.<sup>397</sup> Salon performances also demonstrated the elevated status of the performer and audience by the quality of the instrument or the style of music played on it.<sup>398</sup>

The musical styles of Angela Peralta's compositions in her *Album Musical de Angela Peralta* (1875) remain consistent with other Mexican salon or parlor pieces from the late nineteenth century.<sup>399</sup> As in Europe, the most popular salon pieces were dances written for piano, such as habaneras, mazurkas, polkas, and waltzes.<sup>400</sup> *Album Musical de Angela Peralta* contains nineteen works, of which fourteen are for piano, and five for voice and piano.<sup>401</sup> The piano pieces are mostly dances: a *polka*, a *mazurka*, a *schottisch*, two *danzas*, five *valses* (waltzes), and a *galopa* (there are also four *fantasias*, another common salon genre). Among the songs, four are *romanzas*, and one is a *vals*. They conform to the typical musical styles as indicated by the titles; for example, the waltz is based on a medium-tempo

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<sup>396</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Ecos, Alientos y Sonidos: Ensayos sobre Música Mexicana* (Mexico City: Universidad Veracruzana and Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001), 99-100. Mexico also had flourishing publishing establishments that, for example, made over 14 editions and 1000 exemplars of Mexican composer Luis Jorda's "Elodia," a mazurka for piano. (Miranda, *Ecos, Alientos y Sonidos*, 104)

<sup>397</sup> Julia Eklund Koza, "Music and the Feminine Sphere: Images of Women as Musicians in *Godey's Lady's Book*, 1830-1877," *The Musical Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (1991): 109.

<sup>398</sup> Miranda, *Ecos, Alientos y Sonidos*, 115.

<sup>399</sup> Stevenson, *Music in Mexico* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1952), 206.

<sup>400</sup> Miranda, *Ecos, Alientos y Sonidos*, 101-104.

<sup>401</sup> For this section, I consulted two different exemplars of the *Album Musical de Angela Peralta*, one available online through the Washington University Library in St. Louis, and one at the Escuela Nacional de Música (UNAM) in Mexico City. Both contained all the same pieces, but differed in order and title pages, as well as dedications (the exemplar at the Escuela Nacional de Música contained an extra page dedicating the album to Peralta's lover and later husband, Julián Montiel y Duarte).

triple-metered pattern, and the *fantasias* and *romanzas* are more lyrical in style, with freer forms.<sup>402</sup> Many of the works, such as the waltz “Loin de Toi” for voice and piano, require virtuosic display, due to fast runs or brief cadenzas. This was typical of music performed in Mexico City salons, such as Liszt’s piano pieces.<sup>403</sup> Peralta played the piano, but according to newspaper records she only performed one piece herself, the *romanza* “Loin de toi,” arranged for voice and orchestra. Because Peralta’s compositions remained within the accepted sphere of salon music, they served to further the respectable public image pushed by Mexican critics.

As Ricardo Miranda demonstrated, the cover images of salon works in Mexico City, as elsewhere, were carefully chosen as selling and marketing tools.<sup>404</sup> And, in the context of Peralta’s “feminine” reputation, the lithograph covers of her compositions supported conceptions of her as upper-class, fashionable, and appropriately modest and demure. Peralta likely chose and/or commissioned these lithographs not only to reflect the meaning of each piece, but also to appeal to the middle-class and elite women who would perform her compositions in salons throughout Mexico City by reinforcing their perception of themselves as refined and members of a larger European culture. The lithograph covers of “Un sueño,” “Ausencia,” “Lagrimas,” “Io t’ameró,” “Pensando en ti,” “Ne m’oublies pas,” and “Loin de toi” all depict pale-skinned, fashionably-dressed women in appropriate home scenery, such as ornate gardens, terraces, and the drawing room, illustrating the message of the song.

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<sup>402</sup> By this period, the *romanza* as a salon piece was used to express sentiments, such as in Peralta’s “El Deseo,” but had no overarching form. Jack Sage, et al., “Romance,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/23725> (accessed 21 April 2010).

<sup>403</sup> Miranda, *Ecos, Alientos y Sonidos*, 100.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.



**FIGURE 4-3: “Un Sueño: Vals para piano por Angela Peralta.”**  
*Album Musical de Angela Peralta*  
(1875), npn.

The cover of “Un sueño”(“A dream”), for instance, conforms to societal expectations of women by depicting a fashionably–dressed upper–class woman in an appropriate feminine pose within a context that helps to illustrate the message of the song (see Figure 4-3). In “Un sueño,” a woman is seated on a stone bench in a garden near a large fountain. She is completely covered—very little skin is visible—and her hands are placed in her lap in ladylike pose.<sup>405</sup> She appears to be sleeping, perhaps dreaming, as the title suggests. Her skin is pale, and her dark hair is pulled back at the base of her neck. The combination of a light complexion with brown hair was common in Victorian fashion plates, and more importantly

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<sup>405</sup> Tamar Garb, *The Body in Time: Figures of Femininity in Late Nineteenth-Century France*, The University of Kansas Franklin D. Murphy Lecture Series (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 46–47.

in the context of Mexico, signaled an upper-class and “civilized” identity.<sup>406</sup> Her white dress is in typical European fashion, with a corset (see her cinched waist), crinoline (the fullness of the skirt), and bustle (the large appendage partially hidden behind a plant).<sup>407</sup> The sleeves and the collar of the dress have layered lace trim, considered chic in 1870s France.<sup>408</sup> While the style of the dress demonstrates knowledge of and access to European fashion, the extensive use of lace indicates enough affluence to satisfy opulent tastes. Taken together, the ornate garden, white skin, and choices in fashion exemplify essential components of the ideal Mexican woman, particularly standards of beauty and refinement. Covers such as “El Sueño” in the *Album* serve to distract critics and readers from Peralta’s ambition as a professional musician and composer, and instead remind them of her association with the European model of femininity in Mexico. The choice to exclude images of Peralta from the individual covers can be seen as yet another articulation of her problematic physical appearance. It also creates a connection between her image as a proper Mexican woman and the women who perform in Mexico City salons, despite Peralta’s public success as a composer and an opera performer.

The reception of performances of Peralta’s compositions, by emphasizing extramusical elements, also distracted the reader from the un-feminine ambition represented by these published works, and instead directed their attention to the accomplishments of the

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<sup>406</sup> Sharon Marcus, “Reflections on Victorian Fashion Plates,” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 14, no. 3 (2003): 12. It was common for all hair colors to appear darker in Mexican lithographs. For example, Carolina Civili, who had blonde hair, also appears brunette in the 31 July 1869 issue of *El Renacimiento* (found on page 161 of this chapter).

<sup>407</sup> Fanny Chambers Gooch Iglebart, *Face to Face with the Mexicans* (New York: Fords, Howard, & Hulbert, 1887), 286–287; quoted in Julia Tuñón Pablos, *Women in Mexico*, 73. Lucy Johnson with Marion Kite and Helen Persson, *Nineteenth-Century Fashion in Detail* (London: V&A Publications, 2005), 62–63.

<sup>408</sup> Johnson, Kite, and Persson, *Nineteenth-Century Fashion*, 62–63.

performers, or to Peralta's feminine response to the performance. It was common for critics and biographers to focus on such qualities when describing successful women in the arts. For example, in his 1882 lecture on Mexican poet Doña Isabel Prieto de Landázuri José María Vigil, director of the National Library, represented Prieto as an icon of motherhood because of her poems on the family and home.<sup>409</sup> In creating this image of Prieto, Vigil overlooked her many poems and dramas that dealt with Romantic topics such as unrequited love, and the diverse subjects she addressed in her dramas.<sup>410</sup> Likewise, in his review of Peralta's September 1871 benefit concert, in which a band played Peralta's "Galopa," Enrique Chavarri concentrated on the audience's (including Peralta's) dramatic response to the performance, rather than on the quality of Peralta's composition, or her skills.<sup>411</sup> After describing the "perfect execution" of the 200 musicians who played Peralta's "Galopa," Chavarri explained that Peralta was called to the stage and received a very enthusiastic ovation from the audience. In response to their applause and "bravos" Peralta "cried because of her tenderness...and ultimately fell from fainting into the arms of Sr. Rios [the conductor] almost drowned by excitement."<sup>412</sup> Chavarri focused on Peralta's "tenderness" and her apparent weakness, from fainting, that resulted in Sr. Rios saving her from falling to the ground. No matter how powerful she was on an operatic stage, she remained a woman in

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<sup>409</sup> Jean Franco, *Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 94–95.

<sup>410</sup> Eladio Cortés, "Prieto de Landázuri, Isabel," *Dictionary of Mexican Literature*, ed. Eladio Cortés (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 543.

<sup>411</sup> "Juvenal" (Enrique Chavarri), "Charla de los Domingos," *El Monitor Republicano*, 10 September 1871.

<sup>412</sup> "La Peralta lloraba de ternura...y al ultimo cayó desfallecida en los brazos del Sr. Rios ahogada casi por la emocion." Juvenal (Enrique Chavarri), "Charla de los Domingos," *El Monitor Republicano*, 10 September 1871.

need of support from a (stronger) man. Thus, Chavarri highlighted Peralta's conformity to gender expectations, rather than her ambition, which might diminish her femininity.

As seen in both the reception of her operatic performances and her compositions, Angela Peralta's public image was shaped by critics, who constructed Peralta as an exemplar of the feminine Mexican woman, in contrast to the increasing prevalence of deviant women, represented by prostitutes, *chinas poblanas*, and can-can dancers. As her career continued, Peralta's deviance from prescribed norms became harder for critics to overlook. After her husband's death in 1876, she began a relationship with poet Julian Montiél y Duarte that scandalized audiences. Widows were expected to remain faithful to their husbands forever, while men were expected to remarry (usually to someone younger). She eventually married Montiél y Duarte, but only on her deathbed as she lay dying of yellow fever in 1883.

### **Enrico Tamberlick: The “Feminine” Hero**

Enrico Tamberlick had a problematic relationship with the “hegemonic masculinity” of late nineteenth-century Mexico because qualities attributed to his voice, such as purity and sweetness, were consistent with feminine characteristics, rather than with those typical of romantic male heroes of opera.<sup>413</sup> In addition, in Tamberlick's commissioned *Guatimotzín* the lead role of Cuauhtémoc, portrayed by Tamberlick, emphasized the Aztec leader's honor through his suffering and passivity, rather than the active role usually played by masculine heroes. This depiction of Cuauhtémoc was inconsistent with the dominant “masculinity” of

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<sup>413</sup> The descriptions of Tamberlick's voice elsewhere, especially in Europe, emphasized his “chest C” and the robust quality of his voice. See *La Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris*, 11 November 1877 or *Gazzetta Musical di Milano*, 10 April 1859. The differences between critics' discussions of Tamberlick in Europe and Mexico reflect the preference of Mexican audiences for the earlier *bel canto* style of singing, rather than the richer timbre of mid- and late-nineteenth-century Verdian operas.

late nineteenth-century Mexico, defined by expressions of virility, power, bravery, and aggression, the defense of one's honor, and the denial of pain and suffering.<sup>414</sup> Rather than emphasize the passivity and pain of Cuauhtémoc's character, critics noted other elements of the production, such as its attention to historical and cultural accuracy, perhaps as part of their effort to recover Cuauhtémoc as a quasi-European male hero.<sup>415</sup>

As in the role of Cuauhtémoc, critics reinterpreted elements of Tamberlick's operatic persona, especially his voice and its power over audiences, as masculine. For example, Alfredo Bablot described Tamberlick's pure voice as evidence of his artistry, not a threat to his masculinity. In reviews, critics such as Bablot and Enrique Chavarri appropriated the sweetness, clarity and delicacy of Tamberlick's voice into the ideal "hegemonic" masculinity by emphasizing its expressive power and the ways in it "conquered" the audience.<sup>416</sup> Tamberlick's voice became a symbol of the strength of masculine authority on the stage.

After the premiere of *Guatimotzín* Chavarri stated that Tamberlick's rendition of the "Aria de Cuauhtémoc" reflected the conflicted emotions of Cuauhtémoc, including his "indomitable bravery and profound desperation" that resulted in a much-deserved ovation.<sup>417</sup> Tamberlick's ability to clearly express "indomitable bravery and profound desperation"

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<sup>414</sup> Piccato, "Politics and the Technology of Honor," 331, 334, 345; María Esmeralda Ramos Olea and Laura Catalina Rodríguez Mendoza, "Análisis de la Masculinidad desde la Perspectiva de Género," *El Género y sus Ámbitos de Expresión en lo Cultural Económico y Ambiental*, ed. María Luisa Quintero and Carlos Fonseca (Mexico City: Miguel Ángel Porrúa, 2006), 36.

<sup>415</sup> For more on Cuauhtémoc as a quasi-European hero, please see Chapter 3.

<sup>416</sup> R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender & Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 844.

<sup>417</sup> Enrique Chavarri, "Charla de los Domingos," *El Monitor Republicano*, 17 September 1871.

through his voice Bablot associated Cuauhtémoc's grief and passivity with masculine characteristics including nobility and heroism. The incorporation of anguish and compliance into the "hegemonic" masculinity reinforced both Cuauhtémoc's masculinity and that of Tamberlick. Cuauhtémoc's suffering became evidence of "honor," making it consistent with the dominant paradigm, rather than relegating Cuauhtémoc to an "alternative" masculinity. The role of Cuauhtémoc and Tamberlick's interpretation of this role "forced" a resignification of qualities deemed feminine and masculine both on the operatic stage and in the context of late nineteenth-century Mexico.

The creation of the suffering and passive Cuauhtémoc in *Guatimotzín* resulted in a complex relationship with the core masculinity of late nineteenth-century Mexico City. This "hegemonic" masculinity, while not embodied by most men, was considered the most honored way of being a man, and in its shadow existed subordinate masculinities, such as the effeminate masculinity exemplified by Tamberlick's voice.<sup>418</sup> This alternative construction of masculinity became part of the normative model as representative of artistry, specifically vocal expression. Emphasizing Tamberlick's masculinity through vocal artistry in Italian opera was both pragmatically useful and constructive because it demonstrated the taste and European culture inherent in the Mexican conception of masculinity. It also served to challenge the attention paid women on the stage, such as Peralta. Lengthy positive reviews of men proved that they could outshine women on the stage, as in daily life. Thus, the resignification of such elements as vocal sweetness and purity into the hegemonic

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<sup>418</sup> Demetrakis Z. Demetriou, "Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique," *Theory and Society* 30, no. 3 (2001): 344; Piccato, "Politics and the Technology of Honor," 345.



masculinity served a distinct purpose for the overall project of masculine domination.<sup>419</sup>

Tamberlick's vocal purity and delicacy, as evidence of his "bel canto" training, then no longer threatened his conformity to "hegemonic" masculinity, but rather reinforced it. As Bablot and Gostkowski noted, the clarity of Tamberlick's voice allowed for greater flexibility and expression through which he delighted audiences worldwide.

The power of Tamberlick's vocal performances to captivate audiences helped to establish his reputation as an opera singer and as an icon of European masculinity, the ultimate gentleman.<sup>420</sup> Even before his success as Cuauhtémoc, Tamberlick's power over his audience served to further his perceived similarities to masculine icons, such as ancient Roman conquerors. In his description of Tamberlick's successes in St. Petersburg Mexican critic Gustavo Gostkowski stated that he "conquered the Court, no less than in the city, more crowns than any Roman victor."<sup>421</sup> Gostkowski expanded Tamberlick's "conquered" audience to include theaters throughout Europe, the Théâtre-Italien in Paris, Covent Garden in London, and the Teatro Real in Madrid. Tamberlick's voice became a symbol of triumph.

Despite the heavy upper notes, Tamberlick's vocal sound did not match expectations for the current romantic tenor style. Columnist Alfredo Bablot noted in *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, "Tamberlick does not possess one of those strong, robust, metallic, strident voices that are the delight of the masses' passionate lover of the howls and of the final fermatas."<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> Demetriou, "Connell's Concept," 345.

<sup>420</sup> G. Gostkowski, "La Ópera en México," *El Domingo*, 16 April 1871.

<sup>421</sup> "Tamberlick conquistó en la Corte no menos que en la ciudad, mas coronas que cualquier triunfador romano." G. Gostkowski, "La Ópera en México," *El Domingo*, 16 April 1871.

<sup>422</sup> "Proteo" (Alfredo Bablot), "Cronica Musical: Tamberlick," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 28 May 1871.

In Bablot's opinion, Tamberlick's voice did not conform to the larger, more aggressive-sounding tenor "howls" in demand across Europe, especially in Verdian operas. Interestingly, Bablot also highlighted the differences between Tamberlick's iterations of the "final fermatas," usually a chest high C, and the newer style. Though Tamberlick was known for his chest high notes, the vocal timbre of tenors in the newer style reflected a new approach to this signature of operatic tenors.

Bablot did not see Tamberlick's difference in timbre as a lack, but rather as evidence of artistry. He considered the volume and power required for the new Verdi repertory "the perversion, the destruction, the denial of the old Italian *bel canto*." And, if audiences decided they preferred this new style, Tamberlick would not be able to "modulate with ineffable sweetness, imbue it with seraphic smoothness, emit his voice with those delicate inflections, communicate that enchanting expression..."<sup>423</sup> The sweetness, delicacy, and expressive capability of Tamberlick's voice therefore became a positive reflection upon his character, and did not diminish his perceived masculinity.

In an article about Tamberlick in *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, Alfredo Bablot described the particular qualities of his voice that moved him, with particular attention to its unique timbre. According to Bablot, Tamberlick impressed his audience with "the exquisite sweetness of his modulations: it is clean, sharpened, expressive, pure, smooth as a song, and of a perfect evenness in all his registers."<sup>424</sup> Tamberlick's voice was characterized by "sweetness," emotional expression, and purity, qualities associated with femininity in nineteenth-century

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<sup>423</sup> Alfredo Bablot, "Impresiones de un Dilettante: Tamberlick [Impressions of a Dilettante]," *El Domingo*, 28 May 1871.

<sup>424</sup> "Proteo" (Alfredo Bablot), "Cronica Musical: Tamberlick," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 28 May 1871.

Mexico. Women were expected to be sweet and pure, especially when interacting with their husbands.<sup>425</sup> Bablot, however, couched his description in the context of Tamberlick's success with the Mexican audience at his benefit concert, thus emphasizing the singer's power over his spectators.<sup>426</sup>

In a review of the same benefit concert in *El Domingo* Bablot used similar language to describe Tamberlick's ability to influence the audience through his voice: "The seduction of his singing is irresistible: he sings with angelic sweetness, correct classical technique, impeccable refinement, incomparable delicacy..."<sup>427</sup> Like Peralta's voice, critics connected Tamberlick's to divine purity and innocence—through its "angelic sweetness." Purity, innocence, refinement, and delicacy were all part of the nineteenth-century Mexican conception of femininity, particularly of the upper classes.<sup>428</sup> But again, Bablot carefully placed these elements within Tamberlick's aural "seduction" of the audience—the "sweetness," "refinement," and "delicacy," as part of his artistry, helped him to command the attention of and gain approbation from the audience.

While Bablot labeled Tamberlick's voice with qualities associated with femininity, they reflect his vocal talents and ability to move an audience. His voice then transformed into a tool of masculine power, catapulting him to the same level or above the female opera stars, such as Angela Peralta. Despite this reinterpretation of Tamberlick's voice, its use in the

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<sup>425</sup> José María S., "Advice from a father to his daughter," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 7 September 1869.

<sup>426</sup> "Proteo," "Cronica Musical: Tamberlick," 28 May 1871.

<sup>427</sup> Alfredo Bablot, "Impresiones de un Dilettante: Tamberlick," *El Domingo*, 28 May 1871.

<sup>428</sup> Serrano de Wilson, *Las Perlas del Corazón*, 51, 60, 61; quoted in Martha Eva Rocha, *El Album de la mujer*, 35–37.

portrayal of the suffering hero Cuauhtémoc became problematic because of the Aztec emperor's importance as a Mexican historical figure.

The role of Cuauhtémoc challenged and reinforced constructions of the Romantic opera hero. On the one hand, he exemplified the elite/royal "tenor-in-love" trope, but on the other he signified the exotic national symbol and a passive hero. Royal heroes abound in Romantic opera, including Count Almaviva of Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (1816), Don Juan of Aragon (Ernani) in Verdi's *Ernani* (1844), and Riccardo, Count of Warwick, in *Un ballo in maschera*, all of which were staples in the Mexico City opera scene at this time.<sup>429</sup>

Despite his position as "tenor-in-love" Cuauhtémoc stretched existing conceptions of gendered characteristics in opera. While other operatic heroes, such as Otello and Radames, also represent exotic origins and suffering, they take action in order to alter their respective situations. Otello tries to alleviate the agony and anger resulting from his wife's supposed infidelity by killing her. Radames allows his love, the enemy princess Aida, to escape from captivity in Egypt. In *Guatimotzín* Cuauhtémoc remains passive, and reiterates his unfortunate circumstances throughout the opera, in his aria and duets. This image of a suffering hero subverts the traditional role of masculinity in opera.<sup>430</sup> Thus, Cuauhtémoc lacks the expected masculine display of courage amid adversity, and he and his wife remain imprisoned.

Though Cuauhtémoc's character did not conform to certain norms of romantic opera heroes, he satisfied expectations concerning treatment of high notes, as well as social status

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<sup>429</sup> Ricardo Miranda, "Un Espejo Idealizado: un Siglo de Opera en México (1810–1910)," *Opera en España y Hispanoamerica: actas del Congreso Internacional La Opera en España e Hispanoamérica*, vol. 2 (Madrid, 1999), 152–156.

<sup>430</sup> William E. Grim, "The Male Heroine in Opera," *The Opera Journal* 30, no. 3 (1997): 2.

and interpersonal relationships. For example, Tamberlick's powerful "chest C" (C4) serves as the finale to Cuauhtémoc's aria in *Guatimotzín*.<sup>431</sup> In a 25 June 1871 review of a performance of Rossini's *Otello* in Mexico City, Alfredo Bablot described how Tamberlick's famous sustained chest high C "electrified our public, as it had all the public audiences of Europe..."<sup>432</sup> His "do de pecho," or "chest high C" made him one of the most famous operatic tenors in Europe and in Mexico.<sup>433</sup>

Throughout *Guatimotzín*, Cuauhtémoc complains of his suffering, but fails to take action to stop it. The composer and librettist Aniceto Ortega made this particularly clear in his aria, his duet with his wife (the "Princesa" or Princess), and his duet with Cortés. If masculinity is, at least in part, defined by the denial of suffering, then how can Cuauhtémoc maintain his masculinity as a heroic warrior?<sup>434</sup> Cuauhtémoc's focus on his unfortunate position in these pieces, as interpreted by critics such as Bablot, reflects his honor, rather than his lack of masculinity.

In the "Aria of Cuauhtémoc," the Aztec leader describes his suffering in defeat and imprisonment by the Spanish. He sings, "How I suffered, how I lost. The land has been filled with pools of blood... diminishes and disgraces and all the fruit of my sleeplessness is the calm of prison."<sup>435</sup> Through his choice of text, Ortega emphasized Cuauhtémoc's constant

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<sup>431</sup> Aniceto Ortega del Villar, "Aria de Cuauhtémoc," in "Cuautemotzín," score, ca. 1871, Special Collections, Conservatorio Nacional de Música de México, 41.

<sup>432</sup> "Proteo" (Alfredo Bablot), "Cronica Musical: Otello," *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 25 June 1871.

<sup>433</sup> "Proteo," "Cronica Musical: Tamberlick," 28 May 1871.

<sup>434</sup> Ramos Olea and Rodríguez Mendoza, "Análisis de la Masculinidad," 36.

<sup>435</sup> "Cuanto sufrí, cuanto luché. Charca de sangre la tierra ha sido por todas partes, mengua y

lamenting and docility. Cuauhtémoc dislikes losing to the Spanish, the futility of his efforts and “sleeplessness,” but does not have plans to escape, nor to continue fighting the Spanish. Instead, he seems resigned not only to his own failure, but that of his people as well. If, as Ramos and Rodríguez indicate, a masculine hero must deny open suffering, and as Paglia stated, the “masculine” operatic hero must take action, what is the status of Cuauhtémoc’s masculinity? Both Ortega and Bablot believed the suffering and passivity reinforced the Aztec leader’s honor.

Cuauhtémoc’s grieving for his emotional defeat continues in the next piece, the duet between him and his wife, the Princess (played by Angela Peralta). While she sings of her love throughout the duet, Cuauhtémoc becomes distracted, and returns to his lamenting, “and the seal put on my forehead by the hand of the winner, black is my shame and pain, and my disgrace.”<sup>436</sup> Again, Cuauhtémoc draws attention to his loss to Cortés, and the “shame,” “pain,” and “disgrace” that he feels as a result. He seems unable to change either his situation or the way he feels about it. If he is troubled by pain and shame, and does nothing to overcome it, can he still be seen as a masculine hero? Bablot argued that just the thought of taking his own life for honor’s sake made Cuauhtémoc a masculine hero, even as he submitted to Cortés’s authority.

In the duet between Cuauhtémoc and Cortés, the Spanish leader describes his power over his prisoner, while Cuauhtémoc reaches the height of grief, “O disgrace, o pain...I don’t

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baldón, y todo el fruto de mis desvelos es la calma de la prisión.” Ortega del Villar, “Aria de Cuauhtémoc,” 29–33.

<sup>436</sup> “Y el sello que en esta frente puso la mano del vencedor, negra es mi pena y mi dolor.” Aniceto Ortega del Villar, “Duo de Cuauhtémoc y la Princesa,” in “Cuautemotzin,” score, ca. 1871, Special Collections, Conservatorio Nacional de Música de México, 46, 51–52.

want to live, I prefer to die a thousand times instead of dishonor.”<sup>437</sup> Not only does he still feel the “disgrace” and “pain,” but he now fully recognizes the detrimental effect his imprisonment and defeat has had on his reputation as an Aztec ruler. He wants to die, rather than remain captive. Given the motivation for his suicide, it becomes a reflection of his integrity, rather than as a sign of weakness. Critics supported this assessment in their reviews of the opera and of Tamberlick’s performance.

In the reception of *Guatimotzín*, Alfredo Bablot reinforced the connection between Cuauhtémoc’s repeated laments and “hegemonic” masculinity. Bablot completed the appropriation of Cuauhtémoc’s feminine heroism by the dominant conception of masculinity. He described the aria of Cuauhtémoc as “languid and smooth like the singing of a swan and emotion of an elegy...The scene of the dagger is superb. The recitative of Cuauhtémoc, grandiose, energetic, full of nobility, of abnegation, of generosity, of heroism.”<sup>438</sup> He compared Cuauhtémoc’s aria to the singing of a swan, not a very masculine animal (coincidentally, one that also doesn’t sing). His aria even sounded like an “elegy,” a lament for the dead. Bablot did not, however, consider this a threat to his masculinity. He explained why—by choosing death over pain and dishonor, Cuauhtémoc is noble and heroic, a typical masculine romantic hero, and a figure in the Mexican fight against colonial rule.

Despite his supposedly “feminine” qualities, Cuauhtémoc was received as a hero

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<sup>437</sup> “O baldón, o dolor...No quiero vivir. Prefiero al deshonor mil veces morir,” Aniceto Ortega del Villar, “Duo de los Puñales [Duo of the Daggers],” in “Cuautemotzín,” score, ca. 1871, Special Collections, Conservatorio Nacional de Música de México, 102–107.

<sup>438</sup> “Languido y suave como el cantar del cisne y sentido como ena elegía...La escena del puñal es soberbia. El recitativo de Cuautemotzin, grandiose, enérgico, lleno de nobleza, de abnegación, de generosidad, de heroismo.” “Proteo” (Alfredo Bablot), “Cronica Musical: Beneficio del Maestro Moderati” [Benefit of Maestro Moderati], *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, 25 September 1871.

within the confines of the “hegemonic” masculinity in late nineteenth-century Mexico City. During the late nineteenth-century a mythology of Cuauhtémoc developed, which depicted him as a “winner in defeat.” New monuments commissioned by the government, literary works by authors such as Vicente Riva Palacio, and public speeches by politicians and intellectuals emphasized his symbolic significance as both a martyr for Mexican freedom and a representation of national will.<sup>439</sup> His suffering, pain, disgrace, and dishonor were reframed as evidence of his integrity and understanding of the impact of his defeat. Reviews of *Guatimotzín*, and particularly of Tamberlick’s performance, do not include discussions of his voice, which illustrates attempts to balance the legend of Cuauhtémoc with Tamberlick’s portrayal. As part of efforts to “recover” Cuauhtémoc from Mexican history and make him more “civilized,” it was important to maintain the impression of his strength, so in the end, incorporating both the emotional weakness of Cuauhtémoc and the “artistic” femininity of Tamberlick’s voice may have been too unbelievable for audiences as evidence of heroic masculinity.

Both Tamberlick’s voice and Cuauhtémoc’s continual lamenting deviated from conventional conceptions of masculinity in late nineteenth-century Mexico City. Through the construction of Tamberlick’s public image and Cuauhtémoc’s role in *Guatimotzín*, as well as their reception, these feminine characteristics were transformed into evidence of conformity to “hegemonic” masculinity. The recasting of these men’s essence as masculine served to further both the domination of subordinate masculinities and of femininity by heightening Tamberlick’s fame to that of women such as Peralta, and by improving the perception of the last Aztec King in Mexican history.

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<sup>439</sup> Christopher Fulton, “Cuauhtémoc Awakened,” *Estudios de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea de México* 35 (2008): 15.



## Conclusion

Amalia Gómez, Angela Peralta, and Enrico Tamberlick all had to overcome obstacles presented by gender norms and expectations in nineteenth-century Mexico City. Gómez challenged the dominant conception of modest femininity because she chose provocative costumes and danced the suggestive can-can. She demonstrated how a body is inscribed by contested cultural ideals, such as varying views of femininity, and how conceptions of gender gain meaning through performance and interpretation. Peralta's operatic ambition and personal appearance, though not consistent with ideas of feminine beauty, did not detract from her ability to exude feminine qualities. Critics describe Peralta's voice in terms that conformed to feminine ideals, such as beauty and purity, which reflected her true feminine character.

Like Peralta, Tamberlick had attributes that called into question the dominant or "hegemonic" masculinity, particularly his voice and his choice to portray Cuauhtémoc, a passive hero. Though Tamberlick's voice did not demonstrate the strident and robust sound associated with romantic operatic tenors, particularly heroes, his clear and pure tone did not threaten his masculinity. Rather, the composer and critics incorporated these elements into the "hegemonic" masculinity as evidence of artistry, and thus furthered the dominance by men on the operatic stage. Tamberlick commissioned and starred in *Guatimotzín*, though it depicted a problematic version of the Aztec hero, one that drew attention to his suffering and lack of action. Feminine qualities again were incorporated into masculinity through the construction of the role and the reception of it, which both aided Tamberlick's reputation as a heroic tenor, and advanced the rehabilitation of Cuauhtémoc as a quasi-European Mexican historical figure.

The reception of Amalia Gómez, Angela Peralta, and Enrico Tamberlick in Mexico City illustrates the complex relationship between artistic choices and societal constructions of gender and gender differences. Despite each individual's transgressions, critics viewed Gómez, Peralta, and Tamberlick as exemplars of femininity and masculinity, respectively. The acceptance of these performers by Mexican critics was due in part to their close connections to European "civilized" culture, which served as a model for the recently liberated Mexico. After occupation by both Spain and France, Mexican politicians and scholars saw the arts as a way of "civilizing" Mexico, transferring European tastes and ideas through both public performance and individual interactions with the performers. Opera, because of its association with elite European status, was a particularly important component of this new "civilized" Mexico. Mexican opera composers, through their artistic choices could illustrate not only their own pedigree, but also that of Mexico, while also advocating a particular path for Mexico's future. For example, the operas *Ildegonda* (1866, 1869) by Melesio Morales and *Guatimotzín* (1871) by Aniceto Ortega, while each drawing from the Italian style, exhibit differing relationships to this Italian model. Each composer thereby made a statement about the extent to which Mexico should rely on European influence or Mexican cultures in the formation of the new post-French-occupation Mexico.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE LEGACY OF OPERA AND ZARZUELA IN MEXICO CITY

In late nineteenth-century Mexico City participants in operas and zarzuelas engaged with debates about prevalent conceptions of gender and racial difference, as well as what constituted a Mexican national identity. Through individual interactions and performances, the opera and zarzuela scene manifested a larger discourse of identity formation in the liminal post-occupation position of Mexico between “civilized” Europe and “uncultured” Latin American indigenous populations. Operas and zarzuelas then provide insight into individual, group, and national strategies for dealing with the relations of power in nineteenth-century Mexico and the larger musical and cultural world. The complex ways in which people in the opera and zarzuela scenes reinforced and challenged conceptions of mestizaje, femininity, masculinity, and their relationships to one another, continued to transform the construction of a Mexican-European culture in Mexico City.

In the year 1877 diverse works by composers such as Lauro Beristáin and Melesio Morales, performed by singers including Angela Peralta and Concha Méndez, were staged amid the strength of European power in Mexico City. Mexican performers continued to struggle to establish careers in imported genres like opera and zarzuela, and Mexican composers seemed unable to break through the European repertoire to establish Mexican styles in opera and zarzuela. The season included an indigenous-themed drama, *Xochitl* (starring female zarzuela singers), two premieres by Angela Peralta’s Italian opera company

(Melesio Morales's *Gino Corsini* and Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*), as well as two Cuban-Spanish zarzuela companies that performed "blackface" zarzuelas and arrangements of French opéra bouffe.

The first part of 1877 featured two Cuban and Spanish zarzuela companies headed by José Poyo and José Joaquín Moreno. Poyo's company consisted almost entirely of Cuban performers, such as Cristina Corro and Cristina Pla. Moreno's company was more diverse, with the Spanish stars Matilde Montañes and Rafael Villalonga alongside Mexican singers Pedro Arcaraz and Concepción Méndez.<sup>440</sup> At the beginning of April, the competition for audiences came to a head: on 1 April Moreno's company performed a "colorado" (blackface) zarzuela, *Flor de Thé* (Flower of tea), and on 5 April Poyo's company premiered a zarzuela by Mexican composer Lauro Beristáin, *A Cual Más Feo* (Each More Ugly). Though both works received ovations and critical praise, attention to Beristáin's work quickly faded, while the Cuban zarzuela *Flor de Thé* remained part of the repertoire. Again, Moreno's company later performed arrangements of French opéra bouffe, including Charles Lecocq's *Giroflé Giroflá*.<sup>441</sup> The diversity of the performers and zarzuelas highlight a major contrast between the opera and zarzuela scenes that remained significant throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. While zarzuela companies included more Mexican performers and increasingly incorporated a wider range of zarzuela styles and composers, success in opera remained relatively closed to those not from Europe. In addition, the fact that both Poyo and Moreno chose works that signified "other" race and nationalities in zarzuelas in order to appeal to

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<sup>440</sup> Enrique Olavarría y Ferrari, *Reseña Histórica del Teatro en México*, vol. 2 (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1961), 965. Méndez was also known in Mexico as a cancanera, or can-can dancer.

<sup>441</sup> Olavarría y Ferrari, *Reseña Histórica*, vol. 2, 968. In 1877 these zarzuela arrangements were the only versions of French opéra bouffe performed in Mexico City. The French company did not arrive until February of 1878. (985)

Mexican audiences, and the subsequent success of *Flor de Thé* further emphasize the extent to which Mexican audiences were drawn to colonial European conceptions of the racial and national “other” rather than to themes of mestizaje.

Unlike the zarzuela companies, the Italian opera troupes<sup>442</sup> in Mexico City did not grow in national or stylistic diversity during the late nineteenth century. For example, in Angela Peralta’s 1877 opera company was almost entirely European, particularly Italian, and primarily performed Italian operas by Verdi, Bellini, and Donizetti. Fanny Vogri (later known as Fanny Natali) was a Hungarian soprano<sup>443</sup> who starred in productions supported by Peralta, Quintana Gianolli Lorenzini (Italian dramatic soprano) and Augusto Celada (Italian tenor).<sup>444</sup> In addition, while the company premiered Morales’s opera *Gino Corsini*, the main event of the season was their Mexican premiere of Verdi’s *Aida*. Morales began his attempts to obtain a premiere for *Gino Corsini* in 1874, but did not find an opera company, Italian or otherwise, who followed through on their promise to produce the work until Peralta’s in 1877. *Gino Corsini* was a serious melodrama in the Verdian style. Mexican audiences found the Italian libretto confusing, and though Morales’s opera did not lead to bigger audiences, Peralta’s company performed it twice more in 1877 after the 14 June premiere.<sup>445</sup> After this

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<sup>442</sup> Here “Italian” denotes the usual nationality of composers and the genre of works performed, rather than the nationality of the company.

<sup>443</sup> Giuseppe Verdi, “Dear Giulio,” (letter to Giulio Ricordi), *Verdi’s Aida: The History of an Opera in Letters and Documents*, trans. Hans Busch (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978), 319.

<sup>444</sup> Enrique Olavarría y Ferrari, *Reseña Histórica del Teatro en México*, vol. 3 (Mexico City: “La Europea,” 1895), 968.

<sup>445</sup> Francisco Ramón Pulido Granata, *La Tradición Operística en la Ciudad de México, 1900–1911* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1981), 205.

season, the opera was not performed again.

Later in the season, Peralta's company mounted the Mexican premiere of *Aida* amid very different atmosphere. Mexican audiences had long been awaiting *Aida*, which had premiered in Egypt in 1871. They were especially excited because it would star their own countrywoman, Angela Peralta, and because all of the costumes, scenery, and props had been brought from Italy.<sup>446</sup> Indeed, the premiere and the many subsequent performances received rave reviews from the press and audiences flocked to the theater to see it. Critics particularly noticed the ability of the music to evoke the Orient through the music, dances, and instrumentation.<sup>447</sup> *Aida* alone may have brought in as much as 30,000 pesos in profits.<sup>448</sup> Mexican audiences had further internalized European notions of the exotic, even as Mexicans themselves were included in this category. Critical acceptance of Peralta as an impresario indicates both increased flexibility in conceptions of gender roles, as discussed in chapter two, just as Peralta's European company reinforced the ideals of mestizaje by "civilizing" audiences through performances of Italian operas. In addition, the contrast between the reception of *Gino Corsini* and *Aida* highlights how ideologies of racial and cultural difference impacted Mexican audiences' perception of opera.

Later in 1877 the drama *Xóchitl*, by Mexican writer Alfredo Chavero, premiered. This 26 September 1877 production starred two Mexican zarzuela singers/actresses, María de Jesus Servín and Concepción Méndez.<sup>449</sup> The play told a fictional story of forbidden love

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<sup>446</sup> Olavarría y Ferrari, *Reseña Histórica*, vol. 2, 976.

<sup>447</sup> See the summary in Olavarría y Ferrari, *Reseña Histórica*, vol. 2, 976–979.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.*, 976.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*, 980.

between an Indian maiden, Xochitl (María de Jesus Servín) and a Spanish soldier. The other characters included Bernal Díaz (a Spanish soldier and chronicler), Hernán Cortés (head of the Spanish forces), and Marina (Malinche, the indigenous Mexican lover of Cortés during the conquest). When Cortés decides to pursue her, he kills her lover. Xochitl then kills herself with a knife offered to her by Marina (Concepción Méndez), who Cortés spurned out of love for Xochitl. The importance of Mexican authorship and performance in the production added to the cultural significance of *Xochitl*. It not only demonstrated Mexican accomplishment in the arts, but also reflected the growing interest in Mexico's unique history. In addition, the love story between the Indian maiden and a Spanish soldier referenced the Porfirio Díaz's and elite intellectuals' focus on racial mixture through mestizaje. It received a mixed reception and suffered a similar fate to other indigenous-themed Mexican stage works from this period—it was treated as a novelty and remained outside the regular repertoire.<sup>450</sup> The short stage life of *Xochitl* on the Mexico City stage then reaffirmed the preference for European works as part of the “civilizing” process of mestizaje. As in Ortega's opera *Guatimotzín*, the Mexican theme of *Xochitl* made it a novelty rather than part of a new path for Mexican contribution to the arts. The taste of Mexican audiences then illustrates contradictions of mestizaje by valuing the European instead of Mexican works that exemplify its goals, Mexican creations in European genres and based on European tastes.

The opera and zarzuela scenes in Mexico City continued to illustrate the significance of race and gender in constructing national identities. During the late nineteenth century the rise in Mexican zarzuelas coincided with the further solidification of European supremacy in opera. At this time the zarzuela repertoire mostly consisted of works from Spain and Cuba,

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<sup>450</sup> Ibid., 980.

with arrangements of French opéra bouffe, though the can-can no longer captivated Mexican audiences. In addition, beginning in the 1880s many shorter and more risqué zarzuelas, especially the *género chico* were performed in *jacalones*, temporary tent-covered outdoor stages.<sup>451</sup> The zarzuela companies of Mexican impresarios such as Luis Arcaraz (1881, 1887–1890) and Isidoro Pastor (1886–1890) featured Mexican singers such as Rosa Palacios (particularly 1883–87), but rarely presented works by Mexican composers as part of their regular repertory.<sup>452</sup> Enrique Chavarri noted in *El Monitor Republicano* after the premiere of Beristáin's *A Cual Más Feo* in 1877 that, as in opera, Mexican audiences did not immediately accept zarzuelas by Mexican composers because they still preferred those from Spain and Cuba.<sup>453</sup>

The priority given to European operas in Mexico City is responsible for the lull in performances of Mexican operas following the premiere Morales's *Gino Corsini* up until his *Cleopatra*. In fact, *Gino Corsini* was the last Mexican opera to premiere in Mexico City until *Cleopatra* premiered in 1891.<sup>454</sup> Throughout the 1870s and 1880s opera in Mexico remained almost entirely imported from Europe. Works by Verdi, Donizetti, Bellini, and Rossini remained the central repertory for companies in Mexico City. Each year opera companies from Italy took the stage in Mexico City, and less frequently troupes from France and England traveled to Mexico. Angela Peralta directed her own Italian opera companies as an

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<sup>451</sup> Janet Sturman, *Spanish Operetta, American Stage* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 38–39.

<sup>452</sup> Ricardo Miranda Pérez, “México,” *Diccionario de la Zarzuela: España e Hispanoamérica* vol. 2: L-Z (Madrid: Instituto de Ciencias Musicales, 2002), 304.

<sup>453</sup> Miranda Pérez, “México,” 304.

<sup>454</sup> Miranda, “Un Siglo de Ópera,” 183.



impresario from 1877 until her death while on tour in Mazatlán in 1883. That same year Napoleon Sieni's company premiered Brazilian composer Carlos Gomes's opera *Il Guarany* to rave reviews. *Il Guarany* held extra appeal for Mexican audiences because the production included Mexican soprano Rosa Palacios. In addition, the opera already attained European acceptance as its world premiere was in Milan (1870).<sup>455</sup> Despite its Italian pedigree, *Il Guarany* suffered the same fate as Mexican works, as it was soon cast aside in favor of Mexican favorites such as Verdi's *Il Trovatore* and *Don Carlo*. The demand for new operas by Verdi was finally met in November of 1887 with the premiere of Verdi's *Otello*. Mexican audiences flocked to hear *Otello*, which had recently premiered at La Scala in Milan, and had not yet been performed in most European cities.<sup>456</sup> Even though the score was a crude pirated edition orchestrated by Paolo Villane, *Otello* was the hit of the season, repeated at least seven times in November alone.<sup>457</sup> Along with Italian opera premieres, the 1880s also brought visits from Italian opera star Adelina Patti in 1886 and 1890. Critics in Mexico City noted Patti's established career in Europe, her refined behavior and appearance, as well as her fashionable (Parisian) clothes.<sup>458</sup> Patti's presence therefore reinforced the ideals of gender expectations and racial difference advocated by the Porfirian government and Mexican elites.

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<sup>455</sup> Ricardo Miranda, "El Espejo Idealizado: Un Siglo de Opera en México (1810–1910)," *La Ópera en España e Hispanoamérica: Actas del Congreso Internacional*, ed. Emilio Casares and Alvaro Torrente (Madrid: Ediciones del ICCMU, 1999), 185; Verónica Zárate Toscano and Serge Gruzinski, "Opera, Imaginación y Sociedad. México y Brasil, siglo XIX. Historias Conectadas: Ildegonda de Melesio Morales e Il Guarany de Carlos Gomes," *Historia Mexicana* 58, no. 2 (2008): 805–806.

<sup>456</sup> James Arnold Hepokoski, *Giuseppe Verdi, Otello*, Cambridge Opera Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999), 119.

<sup>457</sup> Olavarría y Ferrari, *Reseña Histórica*, vol. 2, 1202.

<sup>458</sup> For examples, see *El Monitor Republicano*, 31 December 1886, 2 January 1887, 9 January 1887.

The year 1890 brought the premieres of Richard Wagner's opera *Lohengrin*, but Wagner's works did not please Mexican audiences. As critic Manuel Nájera noted, Wagner's operas did not have the separate duets and arias like Italian operas, which confused Mexican audiences because they did not know when to clap.<sup>459</sup> They also found the music boring, the recitatives excessively long, and too fragmented.<sup>460</sup> In short, Mexican audiences were not receptive to operas that did not follow the conventions of the Italian operas they admired. The repertory of opera companies in Mexico City continued to center on works from Italy into the twentieth century. As Leonora Saavedra has demonstrated, while director of Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in the 1940s Carlos Chávez tried to foster a generation of "nationalist" Mexican opera composers, as he also sought to establish a Mexican opera company and opera academy. His efforts were ultimately unsuccessful in part because of the continued "colonization" of Mexican culture by Italian opera.<sup>461</sup>

The opera and zarzuela performers, composers, and works discussed in this dissertation represent a small yet historically significant portion of Mexico City's musical scene in the late nineteenth century. Mexico City's stages included a myriad of theatrical genres in which operas and zarzuelas played a large but limited role. For example, when Italian singer Adelina Patti visited Mexico City in 1886 and 1890 she primarily performed in concerts, rather than staged operas. Alongside public concerts such as Patti's, salon concerts were common in the homes of elite Mexicans who sought to emulate European salons and

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<sup>459</sup> Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera, "Oyendo a Wagner" (*El Partido Liberal*, 30 November 1890), *Obras, Espectáculos*, selected and edited by Elvira López Aparicio (Mexico City: UNAM, 1985), 92; cited in Miranda, "Un Siglo de Opera," 155.

<sup>460</sup> Olavarría y Ferrari, *Reseña Histórica*, vol. 2, 1305.

<sup>461</sup> Leonora Saavedra, "Staging the Nation: Race, Religion, and History in Mexican Opera of the 1940s," *The Opera Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (2007): 1, 5, 18–19.

considered musical education an important part of demonstrating cultural refinement.<sup>462</sup> No one has yet examined the relationship between the musical salons in the context of individual experiences of racial and gender ideologies in late nineteenth-century Mexico. Performers and composers who participated in concerts, salons, and in operas and zarzuelas partially constructed their own identities, and negotiated societal expectations based on their musical performances.

Perceptions of distinct cultures and nationalities also played a role in the zarzuela scene, though to what extent is unclear. Performers and zarzuelas from Spain established and helped to sustain the zarzuela scene in Mexico City beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Later musicians from Cuba and Mexico participated in increasing numbers as performers and composers, and Mexico City audiences came to accept both French opera arrangements and zarzuelas from Cuba. Scholarly work is needed to examine how and why these changes occurred and particularly how Mexicans reacted to racially-charged works including *bufo* blackface zarzuelas from Cuba. Furthermore, the rise in Cuban and Mexican works in the 1880s and 1890s seems to coincide with the decline of interest in the can-can—how and why did performers and Mexican audiences participate in the transformation of zarzuela reception?

In addition to addressing the role of Mexican audiences in the reception of zarzuelas, scholarly work also needs to consider the divergent paths in reception of Italian, French, and German operas, particularly those of Wagner. Why did Mexico City audiences prefer Italian and French operas to Wagner's works? What specific aspects of the music, performance style, and even performers themselves drew audiences to Italian and French opera, despite

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<sup>462</sup> Robert M. Stevenson, *Music in Mexico: A Historical Survey* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1952), 205.

the European pedigree and novelty of Wagnerian opera? Differences between Mexican audiences' perception of Italian and German operatic styles may also be related to political and ideological constructs, such as *mestizaje*, and previous military and cultural occupations, such as that of France.

Mexican admiration of Europe's elevated position in global power relations also helped to determine Mexico City's reception of operas by Mexican composers such as Aniceto Ortega and Melesio Morales. Melesio Morales's operas *Romeo y Julieta* (1863), *Gino Corsini* (1877), *Cleopatra* (1891) and *Anita* (1900) each had a unique relationship to critics and audiences determined by stylistic, political, and cultural factors that need further examination. The ongoing battles against the French occupation in 1863, when *Romeo y Julieta* premiered, resulted in an environment distinct from that of *Cleopatra*, during the height of the Porfiriato. In terms of Morales's compositional styles, little is known about specific changes in his approach to writing opera or how his career as an orchestral conductor and music critic affected his compositional process. Of particular interest is Morales's only opera based on Mexican history culture, *Anita*, which retold the story of the 1867 siege at Puebla through a musical language that combined many styles of Italian opera such as *verismo* and *bel canto*. Despite the possible nationalistic associations of *Anita* for Mexican audiences, it never received a premiere. Perhaps the stylistic changes between *Anita* and Morales's other operas were too jarring for opera impresarios, or maybe it was the Mexican topic. A study of the Mexico City reception of Morales's other operas, as well as an analysis of the opera *Anita* would shed light on the relationship between larger ideological movements in Mexico and Morales's career as an opera composer.

Mexican opera in general, and Morales's *Ildegonda* in particular, has experienced a

revival in twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The resurgence of scholarly interest and performances illustrates that *Ildegonda* and other Mexican operas remain relevant as part of efforts to negotiate and imagine both a historical and future Mexican cultural and musical identities. In 1994, as part of an effort to recover the significance of Morales as an opera composer and an important figure in Mexican artistic history, Mexico's Consejo Nacional para Cultura y las Artes (National Council for Culture and the Arts) and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University of Mexico) collaborated on a project that resulted in the first performance of *Ildegonda* since it premiered in Italy in 1869. Musicologists Eugenio Delgado and Aurea Maya compiled and restored the original score and libretto from the Italian premiere based on published selections and sources found in the archives of the National Conservatory.<sup>463</sup> By “rescuing” *Ildegonda*, Delgado and Maya sought not only to bring new interest in the music of Morales, but also his activities as orchestral conductor and music critic, thereby reaffirming his significance in nineteenth-century Mexican culture.<sup>464</sup> Morales therefore symbolized artistic accomplishment and an imagined Mexican musical identity.

The connection between Morales's *Ildegonda* and Mexico's musical past and future was cemented by the performance itself. The 1994 production featured Mexican director Fernando Lozano and a Mexican cast including Violeta Dávalos and Raúl Hernández, the Choir of the Escuela Nacional de Música (National School of Music), and the Orquesta

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<sup>463</sup> Eugenio Delgado and Aurea Maya, “Melesio Morales y el rescate de *Ildegonda*” (Melesio Morales and the Rescue of *Ildegonda*), *Ildegonda: Opera en Dos Actos con Libreto de Temistocle Solera*, performed by the Orquesta Sinfónica Carlos Chávez and the Coro de la Escuela Nacional de Música conducted by Fernando Lozano, Forlane UCD 16739-UCD 16740, 1995, compact disc, 14–15.

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

Sinfónica Carlos Chávez (Carlos Chávez Symphony Orchestra) at the Teatro de las Artes in Mexico City. While both the Mexican and Italian premieres of *Ildegonda* consisted almost entirely of Italian musicians, the 1994 version demonstrated a more nationalist interpretation, creating a closer relationship between *Ildegonda*, Morales, and Mexican musical accomplishment. It therefore highlighted changes between the late nineteenth century and the late twentieth century in Mexican culture in general, and the opera scene in particular, which created opportunities for professional Mexican opera singers, composers, and companies in Mexico City, such as that established by Chávez in the 1940s.

The “rescue” of *Ildegonda* in Mexico has far-reaching implications not only for Morales’s legacy, but also for that of opera and zarzuela in late nineteenth-century Mexico City. Operas, zarzuelas, as well as their composers and performers from the nineteenth-century remain relevant to current performances and constructions of racial, gender, and national identities in Mexico City. *Ildegonda*’s revival in 1994, and subsequent performances (Jalisco, 2007) signal the beginning of a new movement to re-invigorate the Mexico City music scene by incorporating its musical past as a sign of cultural and musical change, as well as acknowledgement of the nation’s long history of negotiating a shared identity.<sup>465</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> Cecilia Durán, “Con el estreno de la opera *Ildegonda* se inaugurará el Festival Cultural de Mayo,” *La Jornada Jalisco*, 26 April 2007.

**Appendix A: Major Italian Opera Companies in Mexico City, 1866-1890<sup>466</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Company/Impresario</b>	<b>Principal Singers</b>	<b>Selected Repertory</b>
1865-66	Annibale Biacchi	Angela Peralta	Donizetti: <i>Lucía di Lammermoor</i> Morales: <i>Ildegonda</i> Bellini: <i>Sonámbula</i>
1867	Luis Donizetti	Carlota Cattinari Ellisa Tomassi	Verdi: <i>Il Trovatore</i> , <i>Ernani</i> Donizetti: <i>Lucrezia Borgia</i>
1871	Enrico Moderatti	Angela Peralta Elisa Tomassi Enrico Tamberlick	Donizetti: <i>Poliuto</i> Verdi: <i>Il Trovatore</i> Rossini: <i>Otello</i> Ortega: <i>Guatimotzín</i>
1872	Angela Peralta	Angela Peralta Paolina Verini Felice Pozzo	Marchetti: <i>Ruy Blas</i> Flotow: <i>Martha</i>
1873	Gustave Gostkowski	Emma Saurel Elisa Galimberti	Verdi: <i>La Traviata</i> Donizetti: <i>La Favorite</i>
1875	Ida Visconti	Ida Visconti	Gounod: <i>Faust</i>
1876	Angela Peralta	Angela Peralta Carmen Pizzani Augusto Celada	Verdi: <i>Il Trovatore</i> Bellini: <i>Norma</i>
1879	Angela Peralta	Angela Peralta Fanny Natali Enrique Testa	Donizetti: <i>Linda de Chamounix</i>
1880	Angela Peralta	Angela Peralta Angelica Rizzi	Verdi: <i>Rigoletto</i> , <i>Aida</i>
1883-1884	Napoleon Sieni	Virginia Damerini Rosa Palacios Francesco Giannini	Gomes: <i>Il Guarany</i> Ponchielli: <i>La Gioconda</i> Verdi: <i>Don Carlo</i>
1886	H. Abbey & M. Mayer	Adelina Patti Sofia Scalchi	Donizetti: <i>Lucía di Lammermoor</i> Rossini: <i>Semiramide</i>
1890	Abbey-Grau	Adelina Patti Emma Albani Francesco Tamagno	Rossini: <i>Il Barbiere di Siviglia</i> Gounod: <i>Faust</i>
1890	Napoleon Sieni	Elena Leroux Hortensia Synnerberg Federico Gambarelli	Wagner: <i>Lohengrin</i> Verdi: <i>Rigoletto</i> Bizet: <i>Carmen</i>

<sup>466</sup> Ricardo Miranda, “El Espejo Idealizado: un Siglo de Ópera en México (1810–1910),” *La Ópera en España e Hispanoamérica: Una Creación Propia: Madrid, 29.XI–3.XII de 1999*, ed. Alvaro Torrente and Emilio Casares Rodicio (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 2001), 185; Enrique Olavarría y Ferrari, *Reseña Histórica del Teatro en México*, vol. 2. (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1961), 729–1280.

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<i>El Boletín Republicano</i>	(1867–1868)
<i>La Casera</i>	(1879–1880)
<i>La Colonia Española</i>	(1879)
<i>El Combate</i>	(1876–1893)
<i>El Comercio en los Teatros</i>	(1878–1879)
<i>El Correo del Lunes</i>	(1879–1886)
<i>El Cosmopolita</i>	(1880)
<i>Le Courrier de Mexique</i>	(1867)
<i>El Coyote</i>	(1880)
<i>El Cronista de México</i>	(1880)
<i>El Defensor Católico</i>	(1872)
<i>El Domingo</i>	(1871–1874)
<i>Don Quijote</i>	(1866; 1877–1878)
<i>El Eco de Ambos Mundos</i>	(1875)
<i>El Federalista</i>	(1871–1878)
<i>El Globo</i>	(1867–1869)
<i>La Jornada de Jalisco</i>	(2007)
<i>La Libertad</i>	(1878–1884)
<i>El Monitor Republicano</i>	(1867–1890)
<i>La Orquesta</i>	(1865–1877)
<i>El Renacimiento</i>	(1869)



<i>El Seminario Catolico</i>	(1869)
<i>El Siglo Diez y Nueve</i>	(1867–1890)
<i>La Sociedad</i>	(1865–1867)
<i>Le Trait d'Union</i>	(1870–1889)
<i>The Two Republics</i>	(1867–1889)

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