

GCD 920309

New release information

April 2009

# 'La Tirana contra Mambrú': Spanish *tonadilla* from c.1800



**La Tirana contra Mambrú**  
The *tonadilla* and popular musical comedies in Spain c.1800

**El Concierto Español**  
Emilio Moreno, violin & director

Raquel Andueza, *soprano*  
Marta Infante, *mezzosoprano*  
Juan Sancho, *tenor*  
Jordi Ricart, *baritone*

## Programme

*La Tirana del Tríptico*  
Blas de Laserna (1751-1816)

*El desengañado*  
Blas de Laserna

*Los payos del Malbrú*  
Pablo Esteve (c.1730-c.1801)

*No aparece la Tirana*  
Blas de Laserna

*La cantada vida y muerte del General Malbrú*  
Jacinto Valledor (1744-1809)

*La Tirana se despide*  
Blas de Laserna

## Production details

Total playing time 62:34  
Recorded in Madrid in October 2008  
Engineered and produced by Manuel Mohino  
Executive producer: Carlos Céster

Design: Valentín Iglesias  
Booklet essay: Emilio Moreno  
English Français Español Deutsch

## NOTES (ENG)

What was the musical soundtrack for the ordinary people of Spain at the turn of the 18th century, when Goya was painting his masterpieces and foreign influences (epitomized by the figure of Mambrú on this recording) were raining down on the country from all sorts of different directions? A dramatic form, the *tonadilla*, which acted as the gossip column of the day whilst attracting the leading composers of the age, powerfully caught the mood of the times and made household names of its star singers. Starting off as short intermezzos performed during the intervals of theatre plays, the *tonadillas* evolved into mini operas, reflecting in a critically humorous manner the trials and tribulations as well as the joys of everyday life as seen through a whole host of memorable traditional Spanish characters.

Directing El Concierto Español, Emilio Moreno expertly captures the spirit of the characterful musical maze ahead that is populated by the *fandango*, *zorongo*, *caballo*, *jopeo* and especially the *tirana* – the bustling, vigorous Spanish dance form which brought the crowds into the theatres for performance after performance. And to assume the roles of those Enlightenment pop heroes in Spain Moreno – as our modern-day *maestro de baile* – is joined by the versatile singing talents of Raquel Andueza, Marta Infante, Juan Sancho and Jordi Ricart.

## NOTIZEN (DEU)

Was war für das einfache Volk in Spanien der musikalische Hintergrund an der Wende zum 18. Jahrhundert, als Goya seine Meisterwerke malte und fremde Einflüsse (die auf dieser Aufnahme von der Figur des Mambrú verkörpert werden) von allen Seiten auf das Land einströmten? Mit einem dramatischen Genre, der *tonadilla*, die als Klatschkolumne diente und die damals führenden Komponisten in ihren Bann zog, wurde die Stimmung jener Zeit auf eindringliche Weise eingefangen, und die Namen berühmter *tonadilla*-Sänger waren in aller Munde. Zu Anfang waren die *tonadillas* nur kurze Intermezzi, die in den Pausen von Theaterstücken gespielt wurden, aber bald entwickelten sie sich zu Miniaturopern, die auf kritische und humorvolle Weise sowohl die Sorgen und Nöte als auch die Freuden des Alltags wiedergaben, wie sie sich aus der Sicht einiger unvergesslicher spanischer Figuren darstellten.

Emilio Moreno leitet El Concierto Español und fängt auf meisterliche Weise die Stimmung dieses unvergleichlichen musikalischen Labyrinths ein, das aus *fandango*, *zorongo*, *caballo*, *jopeo* und besonders der *tirana* bestand, jenem energischen und lebhaften spanischen Tanz, der die Massen wieder und wieder in die Theatervorstellungen zog. Und unser moderner *maestro de baile* Moreno wird von den vielseitig talentierten Sängern Raquel Andueza, Marta Infante, Juan Sancho und Jordi Ricart unterstützt, die die Rollen der Popstars der Aufklärungszeit übernehmen.

## NOTES (FRA)

Quelle était la *bande sonore* du peuple espagnol dont Goya peignait magistralement la vie quotidienne au tournant du XVIIIe siècle alors que les influences étrangères (symbolisées par le Mambrú de ce disque) pleuvaient de tous côtés sur le pays ? Sous une forme dramatique, la *tonadilla* était une gazette des menus événements, une sorte de bouche-à-oreille de l'actualité qui envoûtait les meilleurs compositeurs et sut exprimer l'air du temps en faisant entrer ses vedettes dans la légende populaire. Née comme un petit intermezzo joué pendant les entractes de pièces plus sérieuses, la *tonadilla* se convertit peu à peu en un mini opéra, qui reflétait d'un humour caustique les joies, les tribulations et les plaisirs journaliers en mettant en scène tout un catalogue de caractères espagnols inoubliables.

À la tête du Concierto Español, Emilio Moreno capture d'une main experte l'esprit magiquement incarné dans le *fandango*, le *zorongo*, le *caballo*, le *jopeo* et tout particulièrement la *tirana* – la danse espagnole pétillante, vigoureuse qui attira les foules au théâtre, jour après jour. Et pour parfaire la représentation, Moreno – métamorphosé en *maître du bal* de l'époque contemporaine – a invité les talentueux et versatiles Raquel Andueza, Marta Infante, Juan Sancho et Jordi Ricart à assumer les rôles des pop stars de l'Espagne du Siècle des Lumières.

## NOTAS (ESP)

¿Cuál era la *banda sonora* del pueblo español cuya vida cotidiana pintaba magistralmente Goya a la vuelta del siglo XVIII, mientras llovían a mares influencias extranjeras de toda clase, simbolizadas por el Mambrú de este disco? Bajo una forma dramática, la *tonadilla*, suerte de correveidile de la actualidad, conquistó a los mejores compositores y supo expresar el aire del tiempo haciendo entrar a sus estelares cantantes en la leyenda popular. Nacida como un pequeño *intermezzo* interpretado durante el entreacto de obras más serias, la *tonadilla* se convirtió poco a poco en una mini-ópera, que reflejaba con cáustico humor el sentir diario del pueblo llano, sus frustraciones y sus placeres, desplegando un entero catálogo de inolvidables caracteres tradicionales españoles.

Dirigiendo con mano experta El Concierto Español, Emilio Moreno consigue captar ese espíritu musical que encarnan mágicamente el *fandango*, el *zorongo*, el *caballo*, el *jopeo* y, en particular, la *tirana*: para asistir a ese baile saleroso y vivaz, verdaderas muchedumbres invadieron los teatros, función tras función. Y para culminar esta representación discográfica, Moreno –impecable *maestro de baile* de hoy día– propuso a los talentosos y versátiles Raquel Andueza, Marta Infante, Juan Sancho et Jordi Ricart asumir el papel de los *pop stars* de la España de la Ilustración.



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## An interview with Emilio Moreno



If Spanish music from the Renaissance has become increasingly appreciated in recent decades that from the turn of the 19th century remains a blur for many. Not so for Emilio Moreno who – in addition to his musical expertise in the Baroque and Classical, especially that gained through long association with the Orchestra of the 18th Century – has become something of a specialist in the music of the Age of Enlightenment in Spain. Moreno has been combining Herculean labours transcribing the scores of *tonadillas* from two centuries past with bringing their populist texts and music to audiences of the 21st century – both with singular success. Here he describes the nature of the dramatic genre that is the *tonadilla* and the level of its original success acting as barometer of the feelings of the ordinary people in Spain, especially those of Madrid. “La Tirana” of this CD’s title not only reflected a popular dance style but also a stock character beloved by the audiences (the attempt to link the character with an actress, María del Rosario Fernández, who was immortalized in a painting by Francisco de Goya is, at best, fanciful). La Tirana’s counterpart Mamburú (also known as Malbrú or Malbruc) personifies the people of Madrid’s contempt for their French oppressors at the beginning of the 19th century (they weren’t too keen on the spread of Italian opera either. Here is the unexpurgated *castizo* spirit of the Classical Age!) The *canción de Mamburú* had its origins in a French comic song celebrating – mistakenly as it turned out – the belief that the British general, the Duke of Marlborough (*graffiteed* on the front cover of this CD), had died at the Battle of Malplaquet back in 1709 during the War of the Spanish Succession. Emilio Moreno has, for a long time, been associated with the reappraisal of forgotten or ignored musical jewels from Spain’s past (and is closely linked with Glossa’s own success in that area) and as a trenchant advocate of his own country’s music is the ideal guide for this new exploration into the mysteries of that remarkable area of dramatic art, so unlike that from the rest of Europe but yet so much part of it.

### Did the *tonadilla* represent a form of reaction to the spread of foreign influences (musical and non-musical) in Spain at the time?

Yes and no. In addition to being typically Spanish in its form and structure (*coplas*, *seguidillas*, spoken parts or *parolas* and introductions made up of courtly and more informal forms of dances, the *tonadilla* evolved into a miniature Italian *opera buffa* complete with all the characteristic elements of the latter. The *tonadilla*’s most potent reaction against what was foreign lies in its texts: mockery of the absurd dandy, of the small-minded “frenchified” character, of the irrational person who in a systematic way believes that what originates elsewhere is (automatically) better. For this the *tonadilla* utilizes as its most powerful weapons the slang from the street, castanets, the guitar, *seguidillas*, *fandango* and the *tirana*.

### Who were the *tonadillas* and *tiranas* aimed at?

The *tonadilla* was an especially populist genre and aimed at the middle and working-classes in Madrid, although it was also cultivated in Barcelona, Sevilla, Cádiz, Valencia, México, Lima and La Habana. Initially it shared house room in the theatres with the *entremeses* (intermezzos) and *entr’actes* during the intervals of comedies but by the end of the 18th century it had become established so successfully that the public went to the theatres more for the *tonadilla* than for the play. It additionally found itself moving out of the popular theatres and into the Palacio Real (the collection of *tonadillas* kept in the royal library there is outstanding) and aristocratic houses where a touch of working-class culture was cultivated – that of Alba for example. The *tirana* is a dance form which, for a number of years around the end of the 18th century, became the dance style par excellence favoured by the ordinary people of Spain. Ternary in form it is characterized by bustle and excitement. Many composers were entranced by its vigour, with Boccherini writing one of the most sublime examples: the first movement of his quartet, Op 44/4 is subtitled *La Tirana Española*.

### Were the composers and performers of *tonadillas* also successful in their own time?

Their authors were composers who devoted themselves almost exclusively to the theatre composing not only *tonadillas* but music for the plays, *autos sacramentales*, *fiestas* or an infinite variety of *bailes*, pantomimes, melodramas, by-plays from the dense life of the Spanish theatre: Laserna, Esteve, Valledor, Misón, Moral, Guerrero, Marcolini, Galván, Rosales, all these are composers and repertoires still waiting to be rediscovered. Today we remain very little aware of how important the music in the Spanish theatres of the 17th and 18th centuries was, music that was the equivalent to present day film soundtracks. The *tonadilla* set out to act as a reflection of the daily nature of the ordinary people and by use of humour and a great deal of irony all the sorrows and joys, gossip and topical news were brought to light and criticized through characters as archetypal as *majas*, *manolos*, priests, soldiers, yokels, foreigners, dandies, prissy madames and provincial types such as Valencians, Catalans, Andalucians, Galicians, Creoles and Indians. The composers were the great professionals of the

orchestras from the theatre companies. At the same time they took part in the musical life of the court and in the churches and the cathedrals. The singers were veritable specialists in this popular genre even if they also made also their incursions into the “classical” repertory of Italian opera or religious music. They were idolized by their audiences, arousing in them both passions and belligerent behaviour – examples being the *chorizos* and the *polacos*, which were the groups of supporters of Maria Ladvenant and Mariana Alcázar respectively. Such groups passionately followed – like their modern counterparts do with pop singers – *tonadilleros* such as Mariana Raboso, María Antonia Vellejo *La Caramba*, the great Manuel García or Miguel Garrido.

### Does the *tonadilla* bear any similarities with genres active elsewhere in Europe?

Not as such. To start with the *tonadilla* (and the word *tonadilla* is the diminutive form of *tonada*, that is to say, a song) consisted merely of a song inserted into an *entr’acte*, accompanied only by a guitar. Gradually this became more and more complex until by the beginning of the 19th century the *tonadilla* had become a genuine short opera incorporating many characters, choruses and a large orchestra. The “classical” *tonadilla* hardly ever runs to a full plot and does not involve many characters (sometimes only one), although generally the *tonadillas* for two or three characters give more scope for the gossiping and the criticism that goes on. Such a *tonadilla* comes equipped with a more or less fixed orchestral ensemble and with a number of essentially worked-out formal schemes: generally two movements (*coplas*), followed by the almost obligatory final *seguidillas*. However, such works can become pieces of greater scope, like those on our recording. The difference with the Italian *opera buffa* or the French *vaudeville* is that the plots are less elaborated and there is a constant search of what represents what is Spanish through the language as much as through the musical values (*tiranas*, *fandangos*, *zorongos*, *caballos*, *jopeos*).

### What place do such works fit into music that was being written in Spain at the time?

At times the Spanish Enlightenment was so profound yet at others so snobbish, that it sometimes failed to embrace a positive opinion about what was coming from the ordinary people. An intellectual of the repute of Leandro Fernández de Moratín used to loathe *tonadillas* because of their shallowness (“foolish and scandalous”, he said) whilst another, Tomás de Iriarte, praised them for their freshness, appreciating the formal “Italianism” which was steadily taking shape within the form: in terms of the orchestra, handling of the voices, dramatic complexity, etc. At that time many learned people were disgustingly bemoaning the excess of foreign music (above all the Italian) in Spain, but at the same time idolized Haydn and considered him to be the model to follow. The Spanish music of the Enlightenment is very rich, much more than we tend to think: there is *opera seria* and *zarzuela*, symphonic, chamber, religious music.... The *tonadilla* forms only a small part of a much greater whole waiting to be discovered.

Mark Wiggins

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