

EXPLANATION 4.6: CLASSICISM IN SPAIN

It is the period of men as well known as Francisco de Goya (painter), Fernández de Moratín and Gaspar de Jovellanos (writers). In 1788 Carlos III died. He had reigned from 1759. He was a king who was not enthusiastic about music. That same year began to reign Carlos IV until 1808. He was a cultured king and lover of music.

MUSICAL ASPECTS AND “MAJISMO”

In this period, there was a demand for emphasizing national values. This happened through a phenomenon called “majismo”. The “majo” represents a middle-class man, brave, passionate, whose tastes include music, dances such as boleros, fandangos, seguidillas and tiranas, as well as bullfighting. The “majo” is the opposite of the French fop: a man who lives to be in the latest fashion, grooming himself continuously. The aristocracy also assumed the majismo at the end of the 18th century.

In Spanish Classicism there are three musical aspects that are important in society:

- Public concerts were developed, as well as music for theater, which had Italian influences.
- The zarzuela, Spanish genre par excellence was very similar to the Italian operas. It was reformed and replaced mythological themes by more popular ones. Juan Ramón de la Cruz is its main author.
- In symphonic music, from 1750, the German music of musicians like Haydn was introduced in Spain, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century Mozart's operas began to be known.

GENRES

The Spanish music genres were:

- Scenic tonadilla: consisted of musical numbers in the style of the Italian intermezzi that were interspersed in the intermissions of comedies. It was born as opposition to the Italian opera. It had several phases being the most important from 1771 to 1790.
- Christmas carols: similar to the German cantatas, that is, polyphonic music. They alternate aria da capo and recitativo. This genre began to decline and in 1765 was prohibited in religious acts.
- The melogogue: is of French influence. It is a play for one person who declaimed in hendecasyllables while the orchestra interpreted the feelings of the verses. Later the characters increased and stopped being monologues.
- Sacramental autos: they are liturgical plays.
- The most universal genres were: Oratorios: also called sacred dramas. They were representations about religious events.
- Chamber music: specially quartets and quintets.
- Symphonic music, that is to say, for orchestra, especially symphonies and concerts.
- Opera: there is no important Spanish opera, most of them were Italian works and they were prohibited in 1799 because they were very expensive.

MUSICAL PLACES

The most important places for making music were:

- The Royal Chapel in Madrid, in which the public could freely attend liturgical events.
- The Escorial Chapel, where Father Soler worked. He was one of the most renowned Spanish teachers and the teacher of the son of Carlos III, the infant Gabriel.
- The Court of Luis de Borbon (brother of Carlos III). Ruled by the Italian Luigi Boccherini.
- The houses of the nobles, like the House of Alba and the House of Benavente.
- Academies and Societies of friends, where concerts and operas were performed.

- The many theaters that opened, like the one in Santa Cruz in Barcelona where operas were performed.

MÚSICIANS

The following musicians stand out:

- Father Antonio Soler, in music for keyboard.
- Luigi Boccherini, in chamber music, especially in quartets and string quintets.
- Fernando Sor and Dionisio Aguado, in classical guitar, with great boom towards the end of the century.
- Pablo Esteve and Blas Laserna, both in scenic tonadilla and melólogo, the last one.
- Juan Ramón de la Cruz in zarzuelas.
- Manuel García, as opera tenor and melologist.

COMPREHENSION TEXT QUESTIONS

1. From what year and up to what year do the Bourbons reigned?
2. What characteristics did the majos have?
3. What three musical social aspects were developed in the Bourbon period?
4. In what aspect was the zarzuela reformed?
5. What was the tonadilla and what was it like?
6. What is a melogogue and what stands out musically in it?
7. Where did Father Soler work and who was his student?
8. Name three musical places from 1750 including that of the king's brother.
9. What was performed in the Santa Cruz Theater in Barcelona?
10. Name in this order: a famous tenor, a zarzuelist, a guitarist and a composer of tonadillas.