Spanish Local Color in Bizet’s Carmen
UNEXPLORED BORROWINGS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

Ralph P. Locke

Bizet’s greatest opera had a rough start in life. True, it was written and composed to meet many of the dramatic and musical expectations of opéra comique. It offered charming and colorful secondary characters that helped “place” the work in its chosen locale (such as the Spanish innkeeper Lillas Pastia and Carmen’s various Gypsy sidekicks, female and male), simple strophic forms in many musical numbers, and extensive spoken dialogue between the musical numbers.¹ Despite all of this, the work

I am grateful for many insightful suggestions from Philip Gossett and Roger Parker and from early readers of this paper—notably Steven Huebner, David Rosen, Lesley A. Wright, and Hervé Lacombe. I also benefited from the suggestions of three specialists in the music of Spain: Michael Christoforidis, Suzanne Rhodes Draayer (who kindly provided a photocopy of the sheet-music cover featuring Zélia Trebelli), and—for generously sharing his trove of Garciana, including photocopies of the autograph vocal and instrumental parts for “Cuerpo bueno” that survive in Madrid—James Radomski. The Bibliothèque nationale de France kindly provided microfilms of their two manuscripts of “Cuerpo bueno” (formerly in the library of the Paris Conservatoire). Certain points in the present paper were first aired briefly in one section of a wider-ranging essay, “Nineteenth-Century Music: Quantity, Quality, Qualities,” Nineteenth-Century Music Review 1 (2004): 3–41, at 30–37. In that essay I erroneously referred in passing to Bizet’s piano-vocal score as having been published by Heugel; the publisher was, of course, Choudens.

¹. Many Gypsies today prefer to be known as Roma. I preserve “Gypsy” (gitano, etc.), as is customary, for literary and operatic characters based on widely held notions about them, whether these notions are accurate or not. In Spain, in any case, gitano (of which Gypsy is the rough English equivalent) remains more acceptable to the gitanos themselves than words such as Zigeuner are in
was treated slightly in 1875—or even rejected outright—by many in the audience and most of the critics.²

But, like its title character, Carmen is a survivor. Within a few years it resurfaced, outfitted with competent if sometimes leaden recitatives by the composer Ernest Guiraud (Bizet having died in the meantime). In that form it went on to triumph on the world’s stages.³ In time, the original spoken-dialogue version became a central item of the repertoire at the very locale where it had first failed to please, Paris’s Théâtre de l’Opéra-Comique. Today Carmen remains one of the most frequently performed, recorded, and filmed operas. It is also possibly the one opera—indeed the one “classical” work—that is most often alluded to or freely adapted in popular culture, from various Olympic figure-skating routines to Carmen: A Hip Hopera (2001), based on the work’s libretto (and a tiny bit of its music) and featuring the pop diva Beyoncé Knowles and the screen actor Mekhi Phifer.⁴

Carmen’s ongoing success clearly derives in large part from the very features that made it exceptional—and initially problematic—within the opéra comique repertoire of the 1870s. These include a plot of quite serious intent; an ending that is more or less tragic for the main characters and fatal for the opera’s (anti-?)heroine; musical numbers that play with formal layouts deriving from diverse traditions within and outside the lyric theaters of Paris; a musical style that makes imaginative use of orchestral color and unconventional harmonic and tonal procedures; and, not least, the feature that is the topic of this chapter: music that plainly sets out to evoke, in one way or another, Andalusian Spain, its primary native population, and the distinctive Gypsy (or Rom) minority living in its midst.⁵


3. The opera received its première in March 1875, Bizet died in June of that year (on the evening of the thirty-third performance), and Guiraud’s recitatives were first heard in October (in Vienna), after which they gradually helped the work conquer the world. The history of the work has been often and well told, as, for example, in Winton Dean, Bizet, 3rd ed., rev. reprint (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1975), 129–31; and Hervé Lacombe, Georges Bizet: Naissance d’une identité créatrice (Paris: Fayard, 2000), 630–747, 7–10 (on the work’s fate after Bizet’s death). The so-called critical edition by Fritz Oeser, 2 vols. (Kassel: Alkor-Verlag, 1964; also in a one-volume piano-vocal score, rev. 1969), is misleading on many important points. Oeser’s sometimes spectacularly ignorant solutions have unfortunately—and despite warnings from scholars—been incorporated into certain productions and recordings. Editions that are more reliable include a piano-vocal score by Robert Didion (Mainz: Schott, 2000) and score and parts by Richard Langham Smith (London: Edition Peters).


5. Reasons of space preclude my giving attention to all the numbers in the opera that are obviously, or at least arguably, Spanish— or, more specifically, Spanish Gypsy-sounding. Besides the entr’acte to act 4 and three numbers touched upon more briefly here (the Habanera, the Séguedille,
Evidence of Spanishness

“On the Spanish element [in Carmen] much unnecessary ink has been spilt.” With these brusque words, in 1948, Winton Dean attempted to pulverize and wash away the many prejudiced attacks (and ill-informed encomia) that Bizet’s masterpiece has suffered in the critical and scholarly literature. Dean’s aim was to help us to appreciate the evidence for Spanish style in the work and to consider various plausible ways of interpreting that evidence.

In the intervening sixty years, more has been said on the subject and more ink spilled, sometimes confusing the matter further. Yet the two primary pieces of evidence—one song each by Manuel García (1775–1832) and Sebastián Iradier (1809–1865)—have rarely been looked at closely for what their words or music, or both, might reveal about which version of them Bizet knew and how he reshaped aspects of the two songs to his own purposes. The present study clears the ground one more time and takes that first closer look at the García and Iradier songs, with special emphasis on the García (whose source history is more tangled than that of the Iradier) and the resulting entr’acte.

Dean wrote that “the chief significance of the alien elements [in Bizet’s score] lies in the complete transformation they undergo in their passage through Bizet’s creative imagination: they emerge as much his own as the rest of the score.” I endorse that sentence almost wholeheartedly. My one hesitation: I wish to avoid any suggestion that Bizet has somehow flattened out the distinctive folk and regional—non-French, nonoperatic—stylistic features that he found in Spanish musical sources. As commentators have long agreed—from Julien Tiersot and Edgar Istel to Susan McClary, Lesley Wright, James Parakilas, Steven Huebner, and Hervé Lacombe—certain numbers in this opera tell as foreign—indeed, as exotic. And thus they also tell us something about the characters and situations we are seeing and how we, the audience, are to respond to what we are seeing and hearing acted out onstage in movement, gesture, word, and song.

and the “Chanson bohème”). One might explore in detail the “fate” theme (with three augmented seconds in its “scale”), Carmen’s taunting “Tra la la” song to Zuñiga, Escamillo’s Toreador Song (especially its opening section in bolero rhythm), Don José’s “Halte-là,” Carmen’s dance-song with castanets for Don José, and the music that opens the final act (outside the bullfighting arena). The question of how Spanish Gypsies are represented in numbers that do not sound foreign is addressed (with regard to the chorus that opens act 3 and Carmen’s Card Aria) in Locke, Musical Exoticism, 160–74; the Card Aria discussion first appeared in Ralph P. Locke, “A Broader View of Musical Exoticism,” Journal of Musicology 24 (2007): 506–11.

6. Dean, Bizet, 228.
8. Dean, Bizet, 232.
From 1804 Aria to Song

Bizet based the entr’acte to act 4 on the Andalusian-style serenade “Cuerpo bueno, alma divina” from Manuel García’s light opera of 1804, El criado fingido (The Man in Servant’s Disguise). In figure 14.2 I lay out the basic facts about the song’s most authoritative or influential surviving versions.

García’s song is musically startling for its day, notably in the way that it undermines certain tenets of common-practice harmony (e.g., by avoiding the raised seventh degree). It is also verbally fresh (see figure 14.3). Most striking to a non-Spanish-speaker, only the last vowel or couple of vowels of the lines rhyme (e.g., divina/dormida; this is permitted in Spanish and is called rima asonante or sometimes half-rhyme), and certain lines do not rhyme at all (fallezco/acaba). One can understand why Bizet was attracted to García’s song, a vivid transcribed fragment or close imitation (the distinction hardly matters) of folk culture and one that had been made accessible to the cosmopolitan, musically literate world through the artistry of Spain’s leading operatic composer-performer.

The idea that Bizet’s entr’acte originated in the García song was proposed by Julien Tiersot in 1925 and became even more plausible when, in 1959, Mina Curtiss revealed that Bizet had owned a copy of Échos d’Espagne (1872), a volume of heavily edited and arranged Spanish songs that included this very song by García (see fig. 14.1).

A close comparison of Bizet’s entr’acte with the version of “Cuerpo bueno” that he knew (reprinted here as ex. 14.1) would seem an obvious next step. But the possibility of doing so in reliable fashion has been somewhat clouded by the confusing fact that until now two other versions of García’s song have been more readily available than the Échos d’Espagne version. As a result, several recent comparisons have—misleadingly—been drawn with these versions, rather than with the one that Bizet knew from Échos d’Espagne. These two other versions are the one in the 1804 opera and the one that was published first in 1831 and, again and again thereafter (with slight adjustments), in song anthologies and a music encyclopedia.

9. The original title was “Cuerpo bueno, alma jitana” (Precious body, Gypsy soul).
10. I will not generally repeat citations here that are present in full in figure 14.2 or, for the Iradier song, in figure 14.6.
11. Another García song, Rosal (published in Paris in the Caprichos líricos españoles [1830], though the songs had mostly been composed years earlier) ends, in aforementioned classic Hispanic fashion, “on the dominant chord”—as such a procedure would be heard in non-Hispanic contexts. Celsa Alonso would instead describe such a passage as relying on the cadencia andaluza. Alonso notes that the song “El Riqui-Riqui” is an early example of a composed guaracha. “Las canciones de Manuel García,” booklet notes to Ernesto Palacio, tenor, and Juan José Chuquisengo, piano, Manuel García: Yo que soy contrabandista y otras canciones (Almaviva CD DS 0114), 23, 25.
Figure 14.2. Short history of Manuel García, “Cuerpo bueno, alma divina.”

- Manuscript: F-Pn, MS 13337. The entire 1804 opera is now in the Madrid Biblioteca municipal, MS 194-3 (libretto) and MS 223-1 (vocal and orchestral parts). An incomplete orchestral score of García’s opera is in F-Pn, MS 13807. See James Radomski, Manuel García, 1775–1832: Chronicle of the Life of a Bel Canto Tenor at the Dawn of Romanticism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 308.

- First published in Regalo lírico [A Gift of Song]: Colección de boleras, seguidillas, tiranías y demás canciones españolas por los mejores autores de esta nación (Paris: Paccini, 1831), no. 5. Apparently based on F-Pn, MS 13337. No. 6 in this volume is García’s “El contrabandista,” soon to achieve great popularity.

- Échos d’Espagne: Chansons et danses populaires, coll. and transcr. P. Lacome and J. de Lau-Lusignan [and J(osé) Puig y Alsubide] (Paris: Durand, [1872]), 78–82; pl. no.: D. S. et Cic. 1341. Later issues, with pl. no. [1341], are catalogued in various libraries with the date “1900–25?” “Cuerpo bueno” is, as Lacome points out in his preface, the only song in the volume attributable to a composer. A footnote thanks García’s daughter and son, who, like their late sister, María Malibran, had attained enormous prominence in the French and international vocal world:

Ce POLO est tiré d’un opéra de Manuel Garcia.* Les Éditeurs ont reçu de Madame Pauline Viardot-Garcia et de Monsieur Manuel Garcia (fils) la gracieuse autorisation de le publier dans ce recueil.

*EL POETA CALCULISTA [recte: El criado fingido]

The song lyrics in this volume were translated by Paul Lacome, now better known as the composer of the Spanish-style vocal duet “Estudiantina,” upon which Émile Waldteufel based his waltz of that title. The piano part was “transcribed” (i.e., reworked) by Puig y Alsubide. (Some writers confuse Lacome with Bizet’s friend and student Paul Lacombe; however, the two Pauls were born a year apart.)


- An adaptation of either the 1831 or the Ocón version appeared in Isidoro Hernández, El cancionero popular: 12 cantos populares para piano con letra, 1a serie (Lodre, 1875, 7–9; reprinted, Madrid: Unión Musical Española, 1963).

- The Ocón version was reprinted, with slight changes, in Rafael Mitjana, “La musique en Espagne,” in Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du Conservatoire, ed. Albert Lavignac and Lionel de la Laurencie, part 1, vol. 4 (Paris: C. Delagrave, 1920), 2296–98. García’s “El contrabandista” appears in Mitjana’s article as well.

- Celsa Alonso, ed., Canciones y caprichos líricos, Música hispana, Serie C, Antologías

- CD recording: Manuel García: Yo que soy contrabandista y otras canciones, with Ernesto Palacio, tenor, and Juan José Chuquisengo, piano; DS 0114 (Almaviva, 1995). The performers use the edition in the two Alonso volumes, based on F-Pn, MS 13337 and Paccini 1831, except that Palacio raises the fourth scale degree in the cadenza (perhaps applying ficta rules?). To my knowledge no recording has been made of the version that, as demonstrated in the present chapter, was almost surely the one that Bizet knew (published in Échos d’Espagne, 1872) and upon which he based the entr’acte to act 4 of Carmen.

The earliest source of the song is the version in El criado fingido. Although the opera was performed to acclaim in Madrid in 1804 (with García singing the title role and thus this aria), it was never published. Almost two hundred years later, in 2000, James Radomski transcribed from several manuscript sources the whole aria of which “Cuerpo bueno” is a part and published it in his pathbreaking book on García as performer and composer. As a result, one can easily see now that “Cuerpo bueno” was not an independent song in this opera; rather, it served as the central cantabile movement of a multimovement aria.

The song also turns out to have a fascinating and specific dramatic function that nobody had guessed. The aria as a whole begins with the tenor hero, Vicente—who is disguised as his brother’s criado (manservant)—conversing with another character (his own sister, Jacinta, who, somewhat implausibly, does not recognize him). The “servant” tells Jacinta that one day, when he was on school vacation, he fell in love with a nameless beauty (who was leaning out from her balcony) and sang her a

13. Fingido is the Spanish equivalent of the Italian finto (false, feigning, pretending), as in Mozart’s La finta giardiniera.
14. Vicente was one of García’s middle names. This suggests a further layer of identity play in El criado fingido.
FIGURE 14.3. Text and translation of Manuel García, “Cuerpo bueno, alma divina.”

Note: Transcription and translation based on Radomski, Manuel García; F-Pn, MS 13337; and Madrid Biblioteca municipal MSS 194-3 and 223-1. The text of the polo appears in boldface, with some of the lines that precede and follow it in the opera aria shown in regular type.

Vicente (disguised as the servant of his actual brother, and conversing with his sister):
(Andante, G minor)
Paseando cierto día
En tiempo de vacaciones
Asomada a sus balcones,
Yo vi la mayor beldad. . . .

(Vicente, disguised as the servant of his actual brother, and conversing with his sister):
One day, walking around
During [school] vacation,
I saw, leaning out from her balcony,
The greatest beauty. . . .

(A allegro [recitado], modulating)
. . . Aquella noche misma
Tomando una guitarra
Cuando todos tranquilos reposaban,
Yo junto a sus balcones
Con aire de Andaluz y su gracejo,
Del silencio tan sólo acompañado,
Mi voz dirijo al objeto amado.

(. . . That very night,
Taking a guitar,
When everyone was quietly resting,
I [placed myself] next to her balcony
[And,] with an Andalusian manner and grace,
Accompanied only by silence,
Aimed my voice at the beloved object.

(A allegretto [polo], E minor [resting mainly and ending on the dominant])
Cuerpo bueno, alma divina [Madrid MS: Jitana]
¡Qué de fatigas me cuestas!
Despierta si estás dormida,
Y alivia por Dios mis penas.

Precious body, divine [originally: Gypsy] soul
What hardship you make me bear!
Awake, if you are sleeping
And ease, for God’s sake, my suffering.

Mira, que si no fallezco.
La pena negra me acaba.
Tan sólo con verte ahora,
Mis pesares se aliviarán.

Look, if I don’t die [faint?],
Dark sorrow will finish me off.
Only if I can see you now,
Can my cares be lifted!

Ay, ay, qué fatigas,
Ay, ay, qué ya espiro.

Ay, ay, what hardship,
Ay, ay, I’m dying.

(A allegro [cabaletta], G major)
. . . Un papel me tira, y marcha . . .
A mi padre le doy cuenta,
El me riñe, yo no cedo
Y mis libros echo al fuego,
Y huyo asi de su rigor.

. . . A piece of paper she throws me, and leaves. . .
I tell my father.
He scolds me, but I don’t give in.
And I throw my books into the fire,
And thus I run away from his harshness.
EXAMPLE 14.1. (continued)
EXAMPLE 14.1. (continued)

Exemple 14.1.

Ta porte un instant!

En t'entends ma voix chanter encore.

Pas une, que si non, failleco, la pe-

ne etoile ne luit!

na ne grant me a

ban!

Vieuparis, et sois l'auror,

Chasse

Tan so la corneter a

horu. Mis pe-
EXAMPLE 14.1. (continued)

ma pro_fon_de nuit!
sa_re se a_li_rio_ran!

Ilé_las! pa_rais!
Ay' ay' que fa_ti_gas!
La belle
Ay' ay'

a_mon_reu_se!
que ga_es_pi_ro!
Ah!

pa_rais!

(continued)
EXAMPLE 14.1. (continued)
EXAMPLE 14.1 (continued)

MALAGUENA

Transcrite et traduite
par P. LACOME.

Le morceau suivant a été transcrit avec une absolue fidélité, sous la dictée de trois mon-
dants aveugles. Cette Malagueña peut être considérée comme un type très remar-
cable de ce genre bizarre et étrange, appartenant plus à l’Afrique qu’à l’Europe, aux
Maures qu’aux Espagnols, mais qui, dans son apparente monotone arrive à des effets
d’harmonie inexprimables.

Allegro (m. $=176$).

1. La main droite extrêmement légère et piquée pour imiter la mandoline, et

Ped

Employer constamment la pédale pour imiter le bourdouemont des gui-
dominer le bourdouenont de l’accompagnement.

2. Péd.

Péd. les frappées avec le pouce. L’abaisser chaque fois que l’harmonie change.
EXAMPLE 14.1. (continued)

Ce chant est une sorte de psalmodie qui se plaque sur un accompagnement très rythmé, sans relation de mesure apparente, en obéissant surtout au rythme prosodique.

Hélas! cesse un tel langage.
Si tant poêle danser, danser.

Ped.
EXAMPLE 14.1. (continued)
ralph p. locke

serenade—“Cuerpo bueno.” The “servant” then promptly sings it by way of explanation. The aria concludes with an up-tempo cabaletta in which the “servant” jauntily tells Jacinta that his “father” disapproved of the attachment, so the young man moved out of the family home and gave up being a student (and presumably took up his present “occupation”). (I enclose “servant,” “father,” and “occupation” in quotation marks because the story Vicente is telling is a lie.) Figure 14.3 gives a condensed version of the text of the whole aria; the words of the “Cuerpo bueno” movement are presented in boldface in their entirety.

Whereas the 1804 aria long lay unknown (including, as I shall demonstrate, to Bizet), a version of its cantabile section, largely similar to the original but differing in details that are crucial for present purposes, became available in print as an independent number shortly before García’s death, in an anthology of Spanish songs by various composers published by Paccini in 1831 and entitled Regalo lírico (A Gift of Song). This 1831 version is plainly based on a source copied out by the composer at some point as a separate item—perhaps the autograph manuscript (largely identical to the 1831 Paccini print) that survives in the Bibliothèque nationale as MS 13337, or some other manuscript that is now lost. To add to the confusion, two subsequent versions of the song, both clearly indebted to the 1831 Paccini print, appeared in collections published in 1874 by Eduardo Ocón and 1875 by Isidoro Hernández. Those were the very two years in which Bizet was composing and revising his opera. The possibility thus exists that Bizet managed to see and use the Ocón or Hernández version of “Cuerpo bueno”—or proofs thereof, or materials soon to be used in them—though the tight time frame (and the fact that the two collections were published in Spain, not France) makes this unlikely. In contrast, the 1831 Paccini print itself (or the closely related MS 13337, which at the time was presumably in the possession of García’s daughter Pauline Viardot) could, at least in theory, have been a source for Bizet.

In order to pin down with greater assurance which version(s) of “Cuerpo bueno” Bizet knew and used, I tried to find significant or even tiny variants in the vocal part, but its music turns out to have been transmitted unchanged in the various manuscript and published versions. By contrast, there are notable differences in both the rhythm and the harmony of the accompaniment and in the prelude and postlude (see table 14.1), some quite significant:

---


16. Some intriguing disparities in the Spanish words leave, of course, no revealing trace in Bizet’s purely instrumental entr’acte.
• The 1831 edition and all succeeding versions except Échos use as a prelude García’s orchestral introduction to the opera aria’s cantabile section but strip it of hemiola. The prelude in the Échos version—though for the most part newly composed, presumably by the arranger—does incorporate hemiola. Conversely, García’s prelude uses a conjunct augmented second in the right hand, a strikingly Andalusian feature that the newly written prelude in the Échos version, for whatever reasons, avoids.

• The 1831 edition and all succeeding versions except Échos have only eighth notes on the second and third beats in the song’s accompaniment, whereas the Échos version uses sixteenths on the second beat, following what García had done in the (then unpublished) opera-aria version.

• The 1831 edition and all succeeding versions except Échos employ similar tonal procedures, most notably a bass line that leaps about, in functional manner.

• The 1831 edition and all succeeding versions except Échos end with two brisk measures of chords in the tonic, whereas in both the opera aria and the Échos version the song ends with a sixteen-measure coda that brings the harmony back from i to end, as the song began, on V. (I shall return to the question of whether the 5 in the bass is actually a dominant or an Andalusian-style tonic.)

The conclusion is inescapable: the editors of Échos d’Espagne based their version of the García song on the opera-aria version that is today preserved in a manuscript in the Bibliothèque nationale, Département de la Musique, MS 13807 (or else on some nearly identical manuscript that has since disappeared).17 MS 13807 is the sole surviving autograph orchestral score of the entire aria (and of several other numbers from El criado fingido); in the mid-nineteenth century, it, like MS 13337, was presumably in the care of García’s daughter Pauline Viardot, a noted collector of manuscripts and devoted protector of her father’s memory.18

The most striking evidence for linking the version in Échos d’Espagne to MS 13807, besides the features noted above, is that the prelude of Échos d’Espagne version, as well as its more or less identical postlude—though presumably composed by the song’s arranger, José Puig y Alsubide—turns out to have been based on several measures from García’s original postlude in the opera aria, a postlude that, as noted above, had been replaced by two measures of tonic confirmation in the version in MS

17. It is conceivable, though implausible, that the editors may have based their version on the orchestral and vocal parts that one may assume were in the possession of one of the Madrid theaters throughout the nineteenth century and can now be consulted at the Madrid Biblioteca municipal, MS 194-3 (libretto) and MS 223-1 (vocal and orchestral parts). These parts were much less easily available to the Parisian publisher Paccini than were the manuscripts in Paris. In any case, they do not diverge significantly (in ways relevant to the questions under discussion) from F-Pn, MS 13807.

## Table 14.1. Comparison of the most significant versions of García’s “Cuerpo bueno”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Prelude</th>
<th>Accompaniment rhythm</th>
<th>Bass and upper voices</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madrid MS</td>
<td>Andante</td>
<td>e/B</td>
<td>García’s (w/ hemiola)</td>
<td>(\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\text{ pedal (sometimes } \text{\textsuperscript{6}}\text{)} w/ sliding 6ths)</td>
<td>Yes (ends on (\text{\textsuperscript{5}}))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris MS 13807</td>
<td>All[egret]to</td>
<td>c/B</td>
<td>García’s (w. hemiola)</td>
<td>(\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\text{ pedal (sometimes } \text{\textsuperscript{6}}\text{)} w/ sliding 6ths)</td>
<td>Yes (ends on (\text{\textsuperscript{6}})) but partly crossed out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris MS 13337</td>
<td>None indicated</td>
<td>c/B</td>
<td>García’s (w/o hemiola)</td>
<td></td>
<td>functional</td>
<td>No (ends on i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paccini 1831</td>
<td>None indicated</td>
<td>e/B</td>
<td>García’s (w/o hemiola)</td>
<td></td>
<td>functional</td>
<td>No (ends on i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Échos 1872</td>
<td>Andantino, (\text{\textsuperscript{1}} = 126)</td>
<td>c/G</td>
<td>New (by Puig?), based on contrary-motion material in García’s coda</td>
<td>(\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\text{ pedal w/ sliding 6ths})</td>
<td>Yes (ends on (\text{\textsuperscript{5}}))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocón 1874</td>
<td>Larghetto, (\text{\textsuperscript{1}} = 126, 6/8 meter)</td>
<td>d/A</td>
<td>García’s (w/o hemiola)</td>
<td></td>
<td>partly functional, partly (\text{\textsuperscript{5}}) with sliding first-inversion chords</td>
<td>No (ends on i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bizet 1875</td>
<td>Allegro vivo, (\text{\textsuperscript{1}} = 80)</td>
<td>d/A</td>
<td>New, w. contrary motion</td>
<td>(\text{\textsuperscript{5}}\text{ pedal w. sliding thirds})</td>
<td>N.a.; ends on (\text{\textsuperscript{5}})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Close examination of musical features of the three manuscript versions and the 1831 print makes clear that the last is the source from which almost all later publications of “Cuerpo bueno,” including one that appeared in the Lavignac Encyclopédie, are directly or indirectly derived. (The Paccini 1831 edition and all succeeding versions except Échos have the authentic prelude [ultimately from the manuscripts], but they have no hemiola in the prelude [whereas Échos and the aria manuscripts do], they have no sixteenths in the accompaniment of the song proper [whereas Échos and the aria manuscripts do], they have harmonies that are more similar to each other [including a changing bass line, whereas Échos’s harmonies are almost exactly those of the aria manuscripts—sixths moving above an unchanging dominant pedal], and they have no coda bringing the harmony from i back to V [whereas Échos and the aria manuscripts do].) All, that is, except the version that Bizet knew, in Échos d’Espagne, which preserves notable features from García’s original opera version (pedal bass on B, with harmony in sliding sixths over it in strumming rhythm; and a chunk of García’s coda, ending on the dominant). The Échos d’Espagne version, however, was not entirely faithful to the opera version either. The editors “transcribed” (i.e., arranged) it, the most notable change being the substitution of a new prelude derived from contrary-motion motion material in García’s coda.

*The holograph vocal and instrumental parts (Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid).
†Holograph full score of large sections of the opera (F-Pn).
‡Holograph piano-vocal score of “Cuerpo bueno” (F-Pn).
ralph p. locke

13337, in the published anthology of 1831, and in all other versions based on that 1831 print, such as the aforementioned ones published in Spain in 1874 (Ocón) and 1875 (Hernández).

Furthermore, a number of the unique variants in the Échos d’Espagne version recur in Bizet’s act 4 entr’acte, enough to make amply clear that the younger composer knew García’s song in that version and not any other:

• Bizet’s eight-measure prelude, though musically unrelated to either García’s own prelude (in the opera aria) or the mostly new prelude by Puig in the Échos version, resembles the one in that version in avoiding the augmented second. (Bizet seems to have preferred to save that powerful symbol of southern Spain for the main melody b, to be discussed below.)

• Though the body of the entr’acte does not use an accompanimental rhythm of second-beat sixteenths, such as is found in the opera-aria version and in the Échos version, Bizet’s new prelude does use that rhythm (with its implication of rapid guitar strumming), and in frank manner.

• Bizet’s harmony throughout the body of the entr’acte is built almost entirely on a dominant pedal, just as it was in the opera aria and in the Échos version of the song (and no other versions).

• The upper voices of the accompaniment merely slide up and down in thirds, as if played by a hand moving along a guitar fretboard (against a repeated open-string low note, the aforementioned dominant)—and very much like the sliding sixths in the opera-aria and Échos d’Espagne versions.

It can therefore now stand as proven by internal musical evidence that Bizet used Puig’s version—as published in Échos d’Espagne, which we already know that he owned—rather than any other as the basis for his entr’acte.

From Song to Bizet’s 1875 Entr’acte

I have started with a number of fine details and disparities in order to identify the version of the song that Bizet knew. Once that is accepted, we are free to tackle the long-neglected task of comparing more closely that particular version to Bizet’s entr’acte.

I have also thus far scanted some basic similarities between García’s song and Bizet’s free adaptation because they are common to all the versions of the song and thus would not have helped us identify the particular version that he used. In the remainder of this section I will focus on various features of García’s song as it appeared in Échos d’Espagne, whether or not they are peculiar to that version.

The cantabile that our half-comic, half-romantic hero in the 1804 version says he sang to his balcony beauty is, as authorities on Spanish music agree, a decent imitation of a polo, a traditional Andalusian song in quick triple meter with melismatic passages
Spanish Local Color in Bizet’s Carmen

...on the cry “Ay!” Indeed, the character in the opera himself, in the section leading up to the song itself, announces to his sister that he struck (what he took to be) a suitably Andalusian pose as he lifted his guitar and sang:

Con aire de Andaluz y su gracejo,
Del silencio tan sólo acompañado,
Mi voz dirijo al objeto amado.

[And,] with an Andalusian manner and grace,
Accompanied only by silence [and my guitar],
Aimed my voice at the beloved object.

One can immediately see from this how far García’s opera is from folk culture: the main character is not so much inventing his story, and his serenade, from whole cloth as piecing them together from ethnic/regional stereotypes that were already widespread both within and outside Spain in 1804.

The vocal melody of this song—identical or nearly so, as I said, in all versions—likewise has something of an “Andalusian manner and grace,” for it is composed in what is sometimes called, even by Spanish musicologists, the Andalusian mode (or Andalusian scale), a tonal practice that has recently been renamed “dual tonicity” by Peter Manuel. That is to say, the tune generally uses the pitches of the minor mode, but it tends to hover around the dominant, thereby tonicizing it at least as strongly as the nominal tonic, and may even end on that (tonicized) dominant.

The result is a frequent occurrence of what is sometimes called a Phrygian relationship between the main note (the tonicized dominant) and the note above it (the flatted sixth degree—not, as in true Phrygian, the flatted second degree). In example 14.1 (García’s song), the section that I have marked ends with an emphatic juxtaposition...


20. Grace was not, of course, the only characteristic that Andalusia could connote. In 1829, when the aging Manuel García gave his final performances in Paris, the music critic François-Joseph Fétis pondered whether he sang more like a “Castilian nobleman” or an “Andalusian muleteer.” Quoted in Radomski, Manuel García, 252.


22. More precisely, the song accepts some variability about whether the sixth and seventh scale degrees are flatted or not; in this regard, it resembles many other works that were composed—even in other centuries—in the minor mode, e.g., by J. S. Bach.
of the lowered sixth degree (A flat) and the dominant (G). In the last phrase of the song, though, García’s vocal line finally comes to rest on the tonic. (See section p, before the coda, in ex. 14.1.)

But the Échos d’Espagne version of the song offers a largely different coda that does bring the music back to a very Andalusian-sounding conclusion on the dominant. In addition, this coda, which also serves as a prelude in the Échos version, features contrary motion between the two hands, one bar of which even amounts to literal voice exchange (see the first measures, marked k, in ex. 14.1).

I would suggest that this is where Bizet got the idea of beginning his adaptation of García’s song with a few measures of music that, though largely independent of anything else in that song (besides possibly borrowing García’s second-beat sixteenths), feature treble and bass chords moving in contrary motion to each other. But already in the first measures of the Bizet we begin to encounter details attributable to some combination of compositional genius and protomodernist experiment: the contrary motion here results in far harsher harmony than was typical for 1875 (much less 1804), harshness only slightly weakened for most of us by a lifetime of familiarity with these memorable measures. I draw attention particularly to the pandiatonic cluster of notes in the second beat of measure 2 in example 14.2.

Viewed as a formal whole, García’s polo is a loose concatenation of different ideas that bear at most a family relationship to each other. The diagram presented in figure 14.4 shows that the six different ideas are stated either just once or else two or more times in succession; each idea thus treated then moves on to the next, but, except for the one in the prelude, none of them ever returns. The individual units also vary a good deal in phrase length, as the diagram shows, some stretching out an inherent eight-bar phrase by adding an extra measure or two of accompanimental vamp or by holding on to the final note in a vocal phrase for two or even four measures. The result is a sense of spontaneity and, perhaps, relaxation.

In contrast, Bizet creates an obsessive eight-bar structure for his piece that persists almost throughout. In the diagram of the Bizet aria (see fig.14.5), I try to keep things visually simple by not noting phrase lengths except in the few instances where a passage is not eight measures long. Only one of those exceptions is a flexibly structured developmental episode (g, fourteen measures long). The others are relatively rigid: an episode of eight-plus-eight measures, one of four measures, and a concluding one of nine measures, which is simply an eight-measure episode stretched by an extra measure toward the end as the piece collapses to silence.

Even more interestingly, Bizet actually offers three different melodies in turn—I call them b, c, and f in the diagram—over an identical eight-measure accompanimental pattern, labeled x. The first two, b and c, return several times, a bit rondolike, whereas f is stated just once. I do not find any mention in the Bizet literature of the astonishing fact that all three of these tunes, whenever they appear, are supported by the identical accompaniment. And yet surely, from the 1875 premiere onward, conductors, harpists, and players in the string section cannot fail to have noticed. If one
Example 14.2. Georges Bizet, *Carmen*, entr’acte to act 4, from his own piano reduction in the Choudens piano-vocal score, marked here to coordinate with figure 14.5.
Example 14.2. (continued)
EXAMPLE 14.2. (continued)
Spanish Local Color in Bizet’s Carmen

Figure 14.4. Structural diagram of Manuel García, “Cuerpo bueno, alma divina,” as printed in Échos d’Espagne (1872).

<p>| | | | | | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>k'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k'</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>cadenza</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>i</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>but sitting on ½</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>functional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ending on ½ again</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“dual tonicity”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tonality (PAC)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

takes into consideration all the repetitions of b and c, the one statement of f, and the statements of the accompaniment without any melody atop (for example, the leftmost x in the bottom portion of figure 14.5 and the two in the coda), one tallies no fewer than thirteen statements (104 measures) of accompanimental pattern x, amounting to almost two-thirds of the entr’acte (if one discounts the eight-bar intro, which uses entirely different music).

Prejudicially Simplistic or Imaginatively Respectful of Spanish Folk Tradition?

How shall we interpret this stern self-constraint? Susan McClary has proposed that Bizet, in this and other numbers in Carmen, engages “static bass lines” and other “simplistic [processes]” that reflect the “timelessness” and “lack of interest in progress” that were, at the time, thought by Europeans to be typical of the Orient, including Spain and, especially, Spanish Gypsies.  

23. Susan McClary, Georges Bizet: Carmen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 52. McClary’s statement that “at the end, [Bizet] gives the main tune a decisively tonal harmonization to secure it” (Georges Bizet: Carmen, 106) is untrue; the music retains its modal quality to the last note. Nor is the “the concluding major [dominant] triad” understandable as “a picardy alteration of the phrygian tonic” (ibid.), because that A chord has been in the major mode throughout the
Figure 14.5. Structural diagram of Georges Bizet, Carmen, entr’acte to act 4.

**Note:** All passages are eight measures long unless otherwise indicated. Passages from the 1872 version of García’s “Cuerpo bueno” are identified by italic letters.

- a pandiatonic (m. 2, beat 2: e–f–g cluster) but with variable 7 over 7–6–5–4 whole-step tetrachord bass; hemiola makes the 8 mm. sound like 4 mm. of 3/2; based, arguably, on the prelude (presumably by the 1872 arranger) to García’s “Cuerpo”
- b octave-spanning descending melody
- c rising wind melody in sixteenth notes: based on o and *cadenza* in García’s “Cuerpo”
- d episode mostly in III: 16 mm.
- e extension using trills and triplet runs (and modulating back to i)
- f yet a third descant (in addition to b and c) over the x bass line, using rhythm
- g development of b: 14 mm. (including, at the end, 4 mm. of mainly unison playing)
- h descending-tetrachord bass line and accompaniment (8–7–6–5), without melody; analogous to the whole-step bass in the prelude (a): 4 mm.
- b’ but faltering toward the end, with fermata; melody hints at an augmented second
- e’ accompaniment silent during triplet runs
- x’ coda, dominant confirmation (quiet): 9 mm.

```
 b c b c   b c b' e' c b c g
 a x x x x x d   (x) x x x (x) y x x x  (x) x x'  
 I --------------------III ~~~> I ----------------------
 upper
 but sitting on 5: “dual tonicity”
```

An alternative explanation here seems more plausible and perhaps less censorious: Bizet imagined he was creating a kind of strophic-variation form (with a few contrasting episodes—including the fourteen-measure developmental one, g) that captured a practice central to much Spanish traditional music: setting up a repeating phrase of strummed and/or arpeggiated chords in the guitar (or guitars) and then adding vocal melodies (often with extended melismas) on top. (Of course, variation over a bass line or chordal pattern had also long been a distinctive feature of much composed music in Spain, as exemplified by the *diferencias* of Narvaez or, later, Cabanilles, or the *roma-enr’acte.* McClary’s argument, a recurring one in her book, is echoed somewhat uncritically in Manuel, “From Scarlatti to ‘Guantanamera,’” 316 n. (with specific reference to her on 35).
nesca, the passamezzo antico, or the chords associated with the folia melody.) In 1874, as Bizet was completing Carmen, the aforementioned anthology of Spanish folk songs edited by Eduardo Ocón appeared in Málaga and Leipzig, probably just a bit too late to be of any use to Bizet. It included (in addition to “Cuerpo bueno”) a number of skeletal versions of heavily improvised musical events in various traditional Spanish genres, and some of the results display dissonance levels more intense than those in the songs that we know Bizet had encountered in Échos d’Espagne. (See ex. 14.3, whose “strummed” [rasgueada] chords sometimes involve intense harmonic clashes over a dominant open-fifth pedal—in other words, a 5 9 pedal against a flat submediant chord—and then, after several repetitions, are topped with a vocal melody.)

But Bizet had only to look at the facing page in his copy of Échos d’Espagne—that is, the beginning of a different “Malagueña” (see the last three pages in example 14.1) —to find at least a simple example of a varied melody, in this case instrumental, over a repeated or, as in the case here, slightly altered chordal pattern (see passages marked 1 and—the varied restatement—2).

Writers, even Spanish ones, are perfectly content to state that the opening number of act 2—the “Chanson bohème” for Carmen, Frasquita, Mercédès, and the dancing Gypsy women—is in many ways an effective, imaginative re-creation of a flamenco performance, with the tempo building from andantino to animato to plus vite to a final presto. I would propose that in the entr’acte to act 4, Bizet has likewise captured—
but in a compressed, laconic, and emblematic rather than an expansively theatricalized manner—aspects of improvisational performance in Spanish traditional music. In this case, though, he allows the music to fade away to a whispered, mysterious final A major chord, the dominant in D minor. (This final chord links smoothly to the bright D major music of the opening of act 4 proper, outside the bullfight arena.)

Tiersot did note that elsewhere in the entr’acte Bizet absorbs various “subordinate figurations gleaned from the [Spanish] songs [available to him],” but he gives few specifics. And he made almost the opposite point when he praised Bizet’s main melody—as “vastly superior” to the melodies in García’s song because of its “singularly greater amplitude.” Edgar Istel specifically named the melody in García’s song that I have labeled m as Bizet’s source for the (indeed, singularly ample) melody b. This intriguing possibility was not generally picked up from Istel—either for confirmation or for refutation—by later writers. Both l and m end with the same augmented-second-invoking cadence, so there is no denying a similarity. Istel’s proposal suggests, though not in so many words, that Bizet had peeled off the melody m from the y accompaniment and placed it instead over the x accompaniment: a remarkable, almost combinatorial approach to the collection of stylistic gestures available to him within García’s “Cuerpo bueno.” Istel’s reason for preferring m to l as Bizet’s model for b presumably derives from the fact that m begins at the upper 5 and descends. But then—as if to avoid going too low for the singer’s tessitura—it jumps up an octave for the crucial cadence involving \( \flat 6 - \flat 7 - \flat 5 \). This leap interrupts the effect of a single descending octave span, the very “ample” span that posterity, including Tiersot, has found so captivating in Bizet’s melody b. Furthermore, it deserves to be noted that Bizet, if he turned the page in the “Malagueña,” would have found a melody that, like his b, describes an entire octave descent from the upper fifth degree to the lower, and one that even ends with the same augmented-second melodic cadence that he surely found attractive in the García song and would use at the end of melody b. (See the passage marked 3 in ex. 14.1, seventh page.)

The differences between the “Malagueña” melody (passage 3) and Bizet’s melody b are striking and revealing. The “Malagueña” melody—played by a mandolin over the guitar’s descending broken thirds—uses the escape-note figure formulaically, at the end of every single measure. Bizet instead builds variety into his melody: first a straight scalar descent, then a reversal and ascent, and finally that special melodic cadence with the lowered sixth and raised seventh. Similarly, it is interesting to

26. More accurately, he was contrasting it in this regard to the vocal lines in both “Cuerpo bueno” and García’s “El contrabandista.” Ibid., 580.
28. Perhaps one hears a reflection of the principle of formulaic repetition in the slashing figure that recurs three times in a row in melody f.
compare this to Bizet’s melody \( f \): it too is a variant of a scalar descent from the upper fifth scale degree to the lower fifth, and it, too, repeats a single figure with emphatic literalness; but because that figure is two measures long, there are only three repetitions, not, as in the “Malaguena,” an irritating eight.

Another artful touch: although each time \( b \) appears, it comprises two statements of the whole four-measure phrase just described, those two statements are not identical. Bizet always saves the distinctive escape-note vocal cadence for the end of the second statement (i.e., the eighth measure). The last time melody \( b \) appears in the entr’acte, Bizet puts a fermata over the escape note itself, \( D \), as if finally allowing himself to linger on an aspect of (if we may use the language of the day) Spanish “national music” that he found “curious,” “characteristic,” or “touching.”

Other Borrowings from “Cuerpo bueno”

Before leaving the act 4 entr’acte, I would like to point out three other of its crucial features that clearly derive from the García song. We have already seen that the music sits most of the time on the dominant, exactly as did the version of the García song that Bizet knew (and only that version). Interestingly, though, Bizet reworks the accompaniment, borrowing the chordal pitches and voicing from that version but spreading them across the bar by use of a triplet rhythm that, as Tiersot notes, is found in many other songs in the Échos d’Espagne anthology. I suspect, though, that this triplet rhythm was more familiar to him from a song that, although not in that anthology, was at the time García’s biggest single hit: “El contrabandista” (see ex. 14.4).²⁹

Besides the contrary motion in the introduction (\( a \)) and the tune and harmony of the first tune (\( b \)), two other specific passages are clearly indebted to García’s “Cuerpo bueno.” In “Cuerpo bueno,” section \( m \) is a melodic phrase under which a descending tetrachord bass creates a dramatic departure from the previous sixty-one measures of uninterrupted sounding of the dominant in the bass. The equivalent passage in Bizet’s entr’acte—letter \( y \) in figure 14.5—cranks the contrast up a notch by harmonizing García’s descending tetrachord bass with parallel triads and by offering no melody over them to distract from their brazen voice leading. And Bizet, efficient

²⁹. García’s two famous opera-singing daughters, Maria Malibran and Pauline Viardot, each reportedly interpolated it at times into the lesson scene of Rossini’s Barber of Seville; Berlioz loved the song and taught it to the poet Alfred de Vigny; and Liszt composed (in 1836), published (with a dedication to George Sand), and performed on various prominent occasions an amazing and all too rarely performed Rondeau fantastique upon this very song. Liszt’s piece was greatly praised by Berlioz in the Journal des débats, 12 March 1837. Cf. Radomski, Manuel García, 68. The Liszt is now available on a CD containing also five other Spanish-style pieces by Liszt: Franz Liszt, Rapsodie espagnole and Other Pieces on Spanish Themes, Leslie Howard, piano, CDA67145 (London: Hyperion, 1997). The song deals with a smuggler of contraband goods, someone much like the opera’s Dancaïre and Remendado.
as ever, states the four-measure phrase only once, then slams back into his relentless eight-measure statements of the chordal phrase x.

The other element Bizet lifts from “Cuerpo bueno” is the quasi-melismatic passage—letter e in figure 14.5—stated initially by the piccolo and clarinet and later by the flute. Two recent writers have related it to the prelude of García’s song, but
both were using versions of the song that Bizet did not know.\(^{30}\) In any case, there are, as Raoul Laparra noted back in 1935, two closer analogues within the vocal line of the song itself: some four-bar melismatic passages and a lengthy cadenza (\(o\) and \(p\), respectively, in fig. 14.4).\(^{31}\)

Once one correctly identifies which passage in the song is the likely source for Bizet’s wind passage (\(c\)), one can proceed to note the artful ways in which Bizet reworks it. Both passages are built more or less entirely of two figures: rapid, almost warbling adjacent-note alternations (in \(o\)) and four-note turns (in \(p\)). But Bizet, rather than rigidly separating these two- and four-note figures as García does, combines them as the passage draws to a close (see ex. 14.5, m. 5), demonstrating a subtlety of compositional technique that we might not have appreciated without the García song for comparison.

Pitch content, too, is treated with greater suppleness. Whereas García’s quick vocalises in the cadenza are almost entirely built on the top notes of what we might call the descending melodic minor mode (except for a sharpened leading tone in two turns around the upper tonic),\(^{32}\) Bizet increases variety by beginning his wind phrase (\(c\)) in the ascending minor and switching to the descending minor at the highest notes of the phrase. Indeed, I would suggest that such conventional nomenclature tends to flatten out the felt tension between the raised and lowered versions of the relevant

30. Radomski, Manuel García, 53; Carol Mikkelsen, ed., Spanish Theater Songs: Baroque and Classical Eras (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred, 1998), 49. Radomski’s and Mikkelsen’s claim of influence here—though factually erroneous because Bizet did not know García’s introduction—may have been prompted by a good insight into the similarity in structural function: Bizet’s wind solo, like García’s introduction, serves as a kind of frame for the main tune, except that it follows the tune instead of preceding it. Istel, like Mikkelsen, relies on Ocón’s transcription, in D minor (with the distinctive tempo marking of Larghetto). This leads Istel to adduce the identity of key (D minor) as proof that Bizet knew and used the García song; but the version that Bizet used is in C minor. Or did Ocón adopt the key from Bizet? Though intriguing and by no means implausible, this seems unlikely, because Ocón adopts the metronome mark from Échos d’Espagne: \(\hat{\text{c}}\) = 126. However, in more significant respects—e.g., the prelude, the accompanimental figuration, and the harmonies—his version is closer to that published by Paccini in 1831.

31. Laparra focused on similarities—the rise and eventual fall, and, as he calculates it, the dependence on eight-measure phrases even in the cadenza—but did not note Bizet’s departures from the model. Raoul Laparra, Bizet et l’Espagne (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1935), 60–62. I consider the four-bar passages to be closer analogues because, unlike García’s prelude, they do not baldly state the interval of an augmented second; Bizet, as noted earlier, was careful in this song to avoid engaging too often what may have struck him as too abrupt or stereotypical a gesture. Cf. Jean-Pierre Bartoli, “L’orientalisme dans la musique française du XIXe siècle, la ponctuation, la seconde augmentée, et l’apparition de la modalité dans les procédés exotiques,” Revue belge de musicologie 51 (1997): 137–70.

32. In my article “Nineteenth-Century Music,” the equivalent parenthetical phrase about the ornamentally raised leading tone (p. 33) erroneously appears after instead of before the name Bizet, thus seeming to refer to the latter’s entr’acte rather than the García song.
notes (the sixth and seventh degrees), especially because the C natural in m. 30 effectively turns a dominant seventh chord into a highly unusual dominant minor seventh. We may also note that Bizet was careful to omit the major third of this a7 chord from the orchestral part in that measure, allowing the solo wind instruments to decide the mode of the chord. This careful stratification of texture further enhances the spotlight, soloistic nature of the wind instruments’ role, perhaps even inviting some rhythmic flexibility in performance at that moment. (If any conductor has ever permitted the wind players such freedom, little sign of it can be heard on available recordings.)

Complex “Others” or Primitive “Us”? All these additional features of the entr’acte, along with those discussed earlier, help us see that Bizet was applying a good deal of artistic complexity to his vision of Spanish traditional music. Such a conclusion may seem unsurprising: a master composer, thirty-six years old and at the top of his game, could hardly let himself pen a page of music that was not interesting in several mutually enriching ways. But the richness, and rich Spanishness, of these few powerful pages of music may have implications for how we think about the opera’s locale and its inhabitants.
Describing this entr’acte as one of several numbers in the opera that make use of “static bass lines” in combination with “extensive melodic chromaticism” and/or “modal references,” Susan McClary relates these devices to “orientalist” attitudes:

The structures of [these numbers in Carmen and other] Orientalist pieces are usually simplistic, since complex formal processes are counted among the unique accomplishments of the West. The static bass lines of much of this music betray a Western belief in the timelessness, the lack of interest in progress among “Orientals.” But what the “Orient” offers in exchange for progress and intellectual complexity is the sensuality the West tends to deny itself. Orientalist scores exploit color in place of the “purely musical ideas” that were the pride of nineteenth-century Absolute music. They foreground timbres alien to the standard orchestra or use the orchestra to mimic exotic instruments, such as the guitar or sinuous, nasal winds, as in the entr’acte to Act IV.33

Much of this matches what I hear and sense in various parts of the opera. But what I find in this particular entr’acte, as shown in figure 14.5 and the previous paragraphs, is not simplicity, much less timelessness. Quite the contrary, I find complexity and grim, forward-moving urgency of a different nature than that which one hears in a Beethoven sonata-form movement (though maybe also a little of the latter, in g, which I have described as “development”). If we can agree with McClary that the use of a “simplistic” musical process implies that the culture to which the composer attaches it is somehow primitive or naively simple—or, at best, wallowing in sensual self-indulgence—then perhaps the complexity, intensity, headlong drive, and suppleness that we find in Bizet’s entr’acte, after having looked at it closely and contrasted it with the Spanish music materials that it incorporated and transformed, may be fairly described as implying that that culture exhibits intelligence, determination, even emotional depth. Bizet, far from exoticizing the Gypsies and the Spanish soldiers into inconsequentiality or beastliness, may have tapped in this entr’acte a vein of profound empathy for them and their joys and struggles, yearnings and delusions; he may even have seen aspects of himself and his fellow French citizens in these “Others.”

My point fits well, I think, with one made by James Parakilas: that the score of Carmen “uses all the usual Spanish stereotypes and gives them all a serious twist.”34 This entr’acte and certain other Spanish-tinged numbers in the work grab hold of some of the standard devices—including the relaxed lyricism heard in García’s “Cuerpo bueno”—of dancelike salon song and other kinds of Spanish and Spanish-style entertainment music, and tighten, elaborate, even refract or distort them in ways

33. McClary, Georges Bizet: Carmen, 52.

that signal that Spain and its inhabitants are no longer to be taken as decorations that exist for the distraction of lazy, smug audiences.

In this sense, much of what Manuel de Falla said about the Spanish portraits by Debussy, and particularly *Soirée dans Grenade* (from the *Estampes* for piano, 1904), can be applied as well to several of Bizet’s numbers, and especially the entr’acte to act 4:

The evocative nature of *Soirée dans Grenade* is nothing less than miraculous when one reflects on the fact that this music was written by a foreigner guided almost entirely by his visionary genius. Here we are truly confronted with Andalusia: truth without authenticity, so to speak, for not a bar is directly borrowed from Spanish folklore yet the entire piece down to the smallest detail makes one feel the character of Spain.\(^{35}\)

What does not apply is that Bizet borrows not just motives and bars, but entire phrases and underlying musical processes, from Spanish music: whether by way of “folkloric” music (which Bizet may have heard in various Paris cafés and, I argue, may also have “heard” from the pages of *Échos d’Espagne*) or by way of indigenous artistic compositions (such as those of García and Iradier) that were themselves profoundly indebted to vernacular, largely unwritten performing traditions.\(^{36}\)

Of course, my proposal (based on Parakilas’s) that Bizet’s opera takes Spain’s “inhabitants” seriously skirts an obvious question: which inhabitants of Spain are being described in these few minutes of D minor or A Andalusian/Phrygian orchestral music, played with the curtain down, before act 4? Carmen and her Gypsy companions? Don José and his Spanish countrymen? Are we hearing, more generally, the Spain of dark alleys and nighttime assignations, in contrast to the D major that follows immediately, with the chorus gaily mingling in the sunlit plaza in front of the stadium? Or, if we can momentarily merge the plot of *Carmen* with the story the hero of García’s *El criado fingido* is telling in his aria—if Bizet knew that story, perhaps directly or indirectly from García’s daughter Pauline Viardot—we might envision in this orchestral music an ill-starred, nearly deranged lover singing a serenade with


\(^{36}\) One wonders if Bizet heard the Spanish opera singer Lorenzo Pagans, who repeatedly sang Spanish songs in Parisian homes to his own guitar playing and is memorialized in two superb paintings by Degas that show the painter’s father listening intently. One of these—*Degas’s Father Listening to Lorenzo Pagans Playing the Guitar* (c. 1869–72)—is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. On Spanish singers in the Paris salons of Spanish émigrés and others, see Montserrat Bergadà, “Musiciens espagnols à Paris entre 1820 et 1868: État de la question et perspectives d’études,” in *La Musique entre France et Espagne: Interactions stylistiques, 1870–1939*, ed. Louis Jambou (Paris: Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2003), 17–38.
mounting desperation, then finally resignation or sullen depression, up to a balcony that is suddenly . . . empty. Perhaps his adored beauty has just run off with a much-acclaimed toreador?

This and other interpretive options I must leave hanging in the air. Other observers may propose equally valid readings, perhaps colored by performances they have experienced of the entr’acte or of the opera as a whole. Still, these diverse answers will surely recognize that Bizet and his very skillful and perceptive librettists, Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, created what Parakilas aptly described as a “gripping musical drama” out of “pulp-fiction . . . [and] magazine-romance stereotypes,” thereby putting “real ‘soul’ into the put-on Spain.”

And when we find ourselves sensing the presence of human soul—or alma or âme—in a work of art, are we not coming within hailing distance of the German Geist that, we are told, reveals itself in the greatest works of the Austro-German classicists?

Bizet’s Séguedille: Indebted to Iradier?

The other Spanish song that is regularly linked with Bizet’s Carmen is Iradier’s “El arreglito.” The matter here is more straightforward, in a way. There is only one surviving version of the song: the one that Bizet knew, presumably in one of the editions published in Paris by Heugel in the 1860s (see figs. 14.6 and 14.7). It is often said that Bizet heard the song sung and copied it down, but the closeness of the accompaniment to Iradier’s surely proves that Bizet—however he first encountered the song—ended up working from its published music.

McClary repeatedly refers to the song as a “cabaret number” or even a “pop song” and states emphatically that it may have been in the repertoire of Céleste Mogador, who was what we might call a nightclub performer. But it is worth mentioning that the French edition of the song carries an “as sung by” dedication to “Mlle [Zélia] Trebelli” of the Théâtre-Italien, a singer notable for her performance of some of the standard mezzo and contralto roles, such as Rosina, Urbain, Azucena, and, a few years later, Preziosilla. (Azucena and Preziosilla are, of course, Spanish Gypsies; in time, Trebelli would become an exponent of a third such role, Carmen.) The cover of the sheet music can be seen in figure 14.7. Indeed, as recent research is revealing, Spanish music was in no way as disreputable as McClary’s presentation might lead one

37. Parakilas, “How Spain Found a Soul,” 163–66. Parakilas is, of course, referring (by way of a remark from the mezzo-soprano Teresa Berganza) not to Mérimée’s startlingly brutal novella, but to the day’s more usual literary and light-opera portrayals of Spain.

38. Zélia Trebelli [Gloria Caroline Gillebert] was born in Paris in 1838 and died in Étretat on 18 August 1892. Her Italianate stage name evidently derives from her family name (minus the initial G), spelled backward. She can be seen as Amneris in an illustration of the end of act 3 of Verdi’s Aida as staged at Her Majesty’s Theatre, London (1879). See Nicholas John, ed., Aida: Giuseppe Verdi, English National Opera Guide 2 (New York: Riverrun Press, 1980), 82.
First published by Enrique Abad in Madrid (1857, 1863) and in Paris (under the general title Hommage à sa Majesté la Reine d’Espagne (c. 1857 [Alonso, Cien años, xv–xvi]). The date of 1840 that is sometimes given (e.g., Arno Fuchs, “Habanera,” in Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik, ed. Friedrich Blume, 17 vols. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1949–86), 5:1186–90, is presumably erroneous.

Published as “El ar[reglito” (Heugel et Cie., [1863]), pl. no. H. 2888, with French words by D. Tagliafico; survives in the British Library, the Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid), and the Kunitachi College of Music Library (Tokyo). A facsimile of the title page of this edition is reproduced in Draayer, Canciones de España, p. x, and in figure 14.7, showing the dedication to “Mlle [Zélia] Trebelli of the Théâtre-Italien.”


In the piano-vocal score of Carmen, prepared by Bizet himself in 1875, the Habanera contains the following footnote: “Imité d’une chanson espagnole. Propriété des Editeurs du Ménestrel [i.e., Heugel].”

The Fleurs d’Espagne edition was reprinted as Chansons espagnoles del Maëstro Yradier (avec double texte Espagnole et Français), trans. Paul Bernard and D. Tagliafico (H. Heugel, 1882 [Harvard University]), 18–25 (pl. no. H. 5585). The song in question (no. 3) is dedicated to the mezzo Zélia Trebelli. The word “arreglito” is consistently spelled with one “r.”

The Chansons espagnoles version of the Fleurs d’Espagne collection presumably was reprinted over the years, as copies survive in a number of libraries. Bizet’s wife (or daughter—accounts vary) recalled that the composer owned a copy, though Winton Dean plausibly supposes that she meant Échos d’Espagne.


CD recording: A straightforward performance is included on the CD that accompanies Draayer, Canciones de España (Suzanne Rhodes Draayer, soprano, and Judy Stafslien, piano).
to think. This is not to deny that Galli-Marié’s performance of the role of Carmen transgressed the boundaries of bourgeois propriety—a different point entirely, well supported by some of the newspaper and magazine reviews published by Lesley Wright.

Bizet’s alterations to Iradier’s melody have been keenly, if briefly, noted by Edgar Istel, Raoul Laparra, Winton Dean, Susan McClary, James Parakilas, and others, and a closer analysis—like that provided above for the entr’acte—would prove revealing. For my present purposes, I would like to stress merely that one might link the words of the Iradier song to the dramatic situation in a later number in Bizet’s act 1, the Séguedille and duo. Or, to put it more cautiously, we might propose that Iradier’s words were misunderstood in such a way as to suggest the plot carried out in the Séguedille.

I say “might propose” for a reason. Iradier’s song—parts of whose text are given in figure 14.8—is a conversation between a rather ardent suitor and his somewhat proud but teasing girlfriend. Iradier neglected to state the two characters’ names, but the woman calls the man Pepito, and he addresses her as “Chinita mía,” which could mean either “my Chinita” or else “my little darling.” (The word begins a line of verse, and thus the fact that it is capitalized does not help us distinguish. The French translation in the 1865 publication treats it as her name, ignoring that Pepito addresses her again, later in the song, with a parallel expression: “Vidita mía,” “my precious life.”) Furthermore, either Iradier or his publisher neglected to give much punctuation or to indicate which of the two characters sings which phrases. (The two characters never sing at the same time, and the vocal line is written on a single staff.) Thus, one might easily

---

39. See Bergadà, “Musiciens espagnols,” 23–26, 30; the article includes chronological and alphabetical lists.

40. Wright, “Carmen”: Dossier de presse, iv. The reviews collected in Wright’s book offer objections to “the movements of [Galli-Marié’s] lower body”), 23; “astonishing moves of her physiognomy” (des jeux de physionomie étonnants), 28; the need for more “sober” (sobre) movement of the shoulders, 28; and so on.

ralph p. locke

apportion the second stanza (lines 6–9, indented as in figure 14.8) in such a way as to create quite a little drama: he declaring that the two will be lovers (“y enamorados”—the measure is marked fortissimo), she responding only (in a piano dynamic) that she will join him on the dance floor (“una dancita vamos a bailar”).

I am not claiming that this interpretation was intended as a valid option by Iradier. It is clearly wrong if one considers the entire text of the song. (Suzanne Rhodes Draayer, in her modern edition, gives a more reliable reading, in which these lines...
Chinita mía, ven por aquí
Que tú ya sabes que muero per ti.
No voy allí
Porque no tengo confianza en ti.
Qué, sí? Qué no, no, no [etc.].

Si tú me quieres dilo quedito
y en seguida seré tu arreglito
y enamorados sin abusar

una dancita vamos a bailar.

[Or she/he/she:
Si tú me quieres dilo quedito
y en seguída seré tu arreglito.

Y enamorados! Sin abusar
una dancita vamos a bailar.

... [Or she/he/she:]

... yo veo con gran pesar
Que todo es guasa, música celestial.

... Si tú me juras serás constante
... yo te lo juro que tu arreglito
por ningún caso te faltará.

... [But] if you swear to me that you will be faithful
... I swear to you that in no case
Will your match fail you.

Note: In the underlaid French text, reproduced below, the woman expresses her doubts even more sarcastically, but likewise yields in the end.

Chinita mia, danse avec moi,
Ne sais-tu pas que je me meurs pour toi?
Pepito mio, mourir pour moi!
Le beau discours, je n’en crois rien, ma foi!

... Veuex-tu, mon âme, dis, sans façon,
Être ma femme, oui? Pour tout de bon?
Chanson charmante, au doux refrain,
Pepito chante, jusqu’à demain . . .
Je suis unie, à toi, Pepito, et pour jamais!

You little darling, come here to me
For you already know that I die for you.
No, I won’t go there
Because I have no confidence in you.
Yes? No [I don’t].

If you want me, say it softly
And in a little while I will be your match.
And, in love with each other, without imposing,

Let us go do a little dance together.

That all [men’s talk of love] is teasing and music of the spheres.

... I see with great regret

To be my wife? Yes? Seriously?

What a lovely song, with a tender refrain,

I am united with you, Pepito, forever!
in the song are entirely assigned to the man; see fig. 14.8). Still, this very “he/she” division of the four lines, however erroneous, is one that a strong, intelligent singer from Ecuador who performed the song at my request in an undergraduate class immediately landed upon when typing up the words and translating them for distribution to the students. Perhaps she was influenced by the “natural” (i.e., long culturally inculcated) tendency in so much European music to associate a loud (forceful) dynamic with maleness and a soft (gentle, yielding) one with femaleness. Perhaps through the same gender logic, this treatment of the four lines as a bantering exchange between two singers was adopted a few years later in what was to my knowledge the song’s first-ever commercial recording (details are given in fig. 14.6), by the freely historicist Spanish dance band Axivil Criollo. In the transcription of the four indented lines in fig. 14.8, I have put Chinita’s/“darling’s” supposed lines in italics, Pepito’s supposed two words in roman. And I have provided the exclamation point that suits this reading of Pepito’s two words. This (apparent) parrying of (he, loudly:) “Love?” / (she, softly:) “No, dance!” is, of course, precisely what happens at the crux of Bizet’s Séguedille and duo (see fig. 14.9). Did Bizet and his librettists, early in the process of creating the opera’s scenario, page through various Iradier songs, stumble upon this passage, and then—truly stumbling—read its Spanish text in the same way that my Ecuadoran singer and the musicians of Axivil Criollo did? Did they thus get the idea from Iradier of creating a number—there’s nothing like it in the Mérimée novella—in which a badgering Don José tries to persuade Carmen to promise to love him and she merely replies with an agreement to go dancing (“Oui, nous danserons la séguedille . . . ”)?

I also wonder whether Bizet and his librettists were more generally intrigued by other lines of text in the song—either in the original Spanish or in the French singing text that the early editions of the song also provided—whose meaning, about men’s untrustworthy promises, is crystal clear. One hears in them a voice that, to my mind, is very like that of Bizet’s taunting heroine in the Séguedille and elsewhere in the opera.

If I am right about a possible influence of the words of Iradier’s song (in Spanish or French) on the end of act 1 of Carmen, or even on the characterization of its teasing


43. On a related matter—what Carmen means by “Oui”—see Ralph P. Locke, “What Are These Women Doing in Opera?” in En travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera, ed. Corinne Blackmer and Patricia Juliana Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), especially 69–74 and 86–87. Lesley Wright has kindly confirmed for me that, in the published piano-vocal score, prepared and proofread by Bizet himself, the composer put a comma after the “Oui,” though the tail of the comma wore off in later printings.
heroine generally, then this connection would prove that Bizet knew Iradier’s song months before he decided to use it as the basis for the version we know of Carmen’s entrance song (whose words begin “L’amour est un oiseau rebelle”), the well-known version that is, musically, a habanera. This number was the last extended stretch of music composed for the opera when the performer of the role of Carmen rejected—wisely—the charming but relatively bland song that Bizet originally wrote for that spot, to many of the same words.44

Besides, whether one accepts that (tentative) conclusion or not, there is no doubt that Bizet knew Iradier’s song. And its words, the sarcastic French ones (the woman: “Le beau discours!”) almost more than the (possibly misunderstood) Spanish ones (the man: “y enamorados,” misreadable as “Y enamorados!”), suggest that some crucial aspects of Carmen herself—such as her tendency to ridicule her lover and his claims of passionate devotion, especially in act 2, when he interrupts her dancing to go back to the bunkhouse—were not as unprecedented as one might think. Although such traits had not yet been put on the Parisian operatic stage, they were already “hiding in plain sight”: in sheet music of 1863 that graced the piano racks of many middle- and upper-class music lovers, bearing a prominent dedication to, and portrait of, one of France’s more prominent mezzos (see fig. 14.7), or in Iradier’s Fleurs d’Espagne anthology, published a year later.

44. Bizet’s first song for this spot (which begins with the familiar words “L’amour est enfant de Bohème”) is emphatically not a habanera. It remains unpublished, though bits of it were visible in the appendix to Oeser’s “new critical edition” of the opera. This number can be heard on Georges Bizet, Carmen, Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse, cond. Michel Plasson, with Angela Gheorghiu and Roberto Alagna, CD 724355743428 (EMI Classics, 2003). It is discussed in rich detail in Hervé Lacombe, “La version primitive de l’air d’entrée de Carmen: Réflexion sur la dramaturgie et l’autorialité d’un opéra,” in Aspects de l’opéra français de Meyerbeer à Honegger, ed. Jean-Christophe Branger and Vincent Giroud (Lyon: Symétric, 2009), 29–45.
In any case, whatever one thinks of my speculation about the Iradier song’s possible link to the events that occur in the course of the Séguedille and duo, the various other connections that I have proposed here regarding the uses to which Bizet put García’s “Cuerpo bueno” seem to me solid—and suggestive of wider implications worth pursuing. We shall be spilling more ink about the Spanish element in Carmen for some time to come, and—I hope—thereby coming closer to understanding the extent and multiple implications of cultural transfer within French lyric theater in the age of some of its greatest achievements.