**Joaquín** **Turina (Pérez)** (b Seville, 9 Dec. 1882; d Madrid, 14 Jan. 1949).

Alyson Payne

Spanish composer. Turina rose to prominence during Spain’s *Edad de Plata* (1900-36), or Silver Age, when Spain’s artistic life experienced a vibrant flowering. Along with Manuel de Falla, Joaquín Rodrigo, and Conrado del Campo, Turina became of one the leading Spanish composers of his generation.

**Life:** Turina enjoyed a middle-class upbringing with a father who had become a noted painter. Turina displayed an early aptitude for music, spending much time practicing an accordion given to him by the family’s servant. He later began to take piano lessons from Enrique Rodríguez, and showed a natural gift for the instrument. He continued his musical studies with lessons in counterpoint and harmony from the choirmaster of Seville cathedral, Evaristo García Torres. Turina gave his first public performance 14 May 1897, playing Thalberg’s *Fantasy on Moïse*, a piece that demanded much technical prowess. The performance earned him notable success, and he decided to study music in Madrid with José Tragó, who had also taught the young Manuel de Falla. Turina studied at the Madrid Conservatory from 1902 to 1905. Like many Spanish composers, he longed to go to Paris to enhance his musical training. In 1905, Turina set off Paris, where he enrolled in the Schola Cantorum and began studying piano with Moritz Moszkowsky, and later studied composition with Vincent d’Indy. While in Paris, Turina socialized with the other Spanish musicians gathered there including pianist Ricardo Viñes, composers Joaquín Nin-Culmell, Isaac Albéniz, and Falla. Upon hearing Turina’s Quinteto op. 1, Albéniz suggested the young composer turn to his Spanish roots for inspiration. Turina stayed in Paris until 1914, after which he returned to Madrid. By this time, Turina had five children, and so he took on various job to support them including writing as a music critic for *El Debate* and later *Dígame*. Also, from 1920 until 1925, he served as the choirmaster for Teatro Real in Madrid. Besides being an accomplished composer and pianist, Turina was also a great conductor. When the Ballets Russes, directed by [Sergei Diaghilev](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergei_Diaghilev), toured Spain in 1918, Falla suggested that Turina conduct the performances. In 1931, Turina was named chair of the Madrid Conservatory. Turina and his family spent the Spanish Civil War in Madrid (1936-39), in relative safety. After the Spanish Civil War, he tried to resurrect the Teatro Real without success. Turina continued to have success in the postwar years, and indeed the government entrusted him with rebuilding Spanish music life. In 1940, he became a commissioner of the Ministry of Education for Music. Turina died in 1949, after a long illness.

**Works:** Turina earned renowned for his symphonic works as well as piano compositions, which number over sixty. His style tends toward the conservative, with the academic influences of his study at the Schola Cantorum. Many of his most popular works fall into the nationalist vein, either using folk material or drawing upon an imagined folklore. For example, his first orchestral work, *La procesión del Rocío* (1912) depicts the Whitsunday pilgrimage to the shrine of Virgin del Rocío in Seville. Turina quotes folk themes to evoke the festivities. Other orchestral works, such as *Danzas fantásticas* (1919) and *Sinfonía sevillana* (1920), also remain quite popular. Of Turina’s numerous piano pieces, *Rincones sevillanos* (1911), *Mujeres españolas*, (1917), and *Concierto sin orquesta* (1935), are among some of his best in the genre. Like many of his contemporaries, Turina wanted to create a Spanish operatic tradition, removed from the zarzuela. While at the Teatro Real, he composed his most successful dramatic work, a short opera entitled *Jardín de Oriente* (1922), with a libretto by Gregorio Martínez Sierra. The worked met with mixed reviews, though it achieved modest success outside of Spain.

**References and Further Reading:**

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**Web Resources:**

<http://www.joaquinturina.com/home.html>