PABLO DE SARASATE:
HIS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

By Grange Woolley[1]

Although the compositions of the great Spanish violinist Pablo de Sarasate are, like those of Paganini and Wieniawski, brilliant virtuoso pieces of enduring popularity, Paganini alone of the three has attracted the continued interest of musical biographers and historians. In the case of Sarasate it has been the general consensus of critical opinion that his works for the violin, in spite of their undeniable concert effectiveness, are of comparatively little artistic importance; nor has the story of his life been considered a sufficiently unique or romantic subject to promise great rewards either to author or publisher.[2] Obviously Sarasate's works are not of a nature to warrant the involved theoretical appraisal which adds so much interest to the biographies of great composers. But that does not mean that they are of small artistic value and historically insignificant; and his biography constitutes an important chapter in the history of Spanish and French music.

Sarasate was born on 10 March 1844 at Pamplona, a picturesque old fortress city commanding one of the principal passes of the Pyrenees and renowned in history as the capital of the kingdom of Navarre.[3] He was christened Martín Melitón Sarasate y Navascues. It was not until he began his professional career as a young concert violinist in Paris that he changed his name to Pablo de Sarasate.

Like most violin virtuosos, he was a child prodigy. His father, Don Miguel Sarasate, a regimental bandmaster, was also an amateur violinist. The story is told that one day Don Miguel was practising his violin and having great difficulty with a technically complicated passage. Little Martín listened for a while with growing and evident impatience. At last Don Miguel, piqued by his son's

[1] Professor Woolley's essay, here reproduced in a slightly abridged form, was the outcome of his sabbatical leave from Drew University, Madison (N.J.), U.S.A.

[2] Two books, both in Spanish, have appeared on Sarasate: ' Pablo de Sarasate ', by José de Altadill, Pamplona 1908, a rather awkward compilation of facts pertaining to Sarasate's career as a virtuoso gleaned from the collection of Sarasate's papers in the Museo de Sarasate, Pamplona ; and ' Sarasate ', by Leon Zarate (pseudonym of Yvette Bourget), Ediciones Ave, Barcelona 1945. Miss Bourget, with whom this author discussed Sarasate during a visit to Barcelona last year, has written an interesting, well-documented fictional biography. However, she scarcely touches upon the question of his artistic, historic significance.

[3] It was during my visit to Pamplona in 1953 that I realized the importance of Sarasate's Basque origin and of the place which he permanently occupies in the hearts and minds of the people of Pamplona. They are now planning a more imposing statue than the present one to honour his memory.

attitude, told him to try it himself. Martín, who at the time was only five, took up his own diminutive violin and played the passage perfectly and with the greatest of ease. From that day—so goes the story—Don Miguel never again played the violin. Perhaps also from that day dated the mild animosity between father and son which later, when Sarasate had won the Premier Prix at the Paris Conservatoire, on his refusal to return to Spain with his father, caused a breach which lasted till the latter's death.

At a first triumphal concert at La Coruña in 1852 the little violinist enlisted the admiration and generous sympathy of the Condesa Espoz y Mina, who made him an annual grant of 2,000 *reales* to enable him to continue his studies. In Madrid, where, like a Spanish Mozart, he became the darling of the royal family, he soon learnt all that Spain's foremost violin professor, Don Rodríguez Saez, felt capable of teaching him. Don Rodríguez urged his pupil to go to Paris in order to study with the famous Alard at the Paris Conservatoire. Accompanied by his mother, the eleven-year-old prodigy boarded a train for Paris. But at the French frontier town of Bayonne Señora Sarasate was suddenly seized with a heart attack and died. Fortunately the Spanish consul at Bayonne, Don Ignacio García, a wealthy, philanthropic bachelor, immediately took the grief-stricken boy in charge. Still another calamity was at hand. The doctor who had been called to attend Señora Sarasate discovered that the boy was in the first stage of cholera. In spite of this and the protests of his two maiden sisters, Don García took Sarasate to his home, rigged up an " isolation ward " in the attic and there personally nursed him back to health.

When Sarasate finally arrived in Paris and was heard by Alard, the latter immediately recognized his unusual promise. Taking from the outset a paternal interest in his new pupil, Alard arranged for him to live at the home of a colleague, Lassabathie, administrative director of the Conservatoire. The Lassabathies were childless, and it was not long before they came to look upon the young Sarasate as their own son.

At the age of seventeen Sarasate was awarded the coveted Premier Prix du Conservatoire. According to all accounts he could have won it before that, but Alard wisely held him back so that he should not begin his professional career too soon.

As a man Sarasate was proud and aloof towards strangers, sometimes condescending and sarcastic with his friends who, knowing his fundamentally generous and affectionate nature, were willing to put up with his unpredictable moods. Those who had been familiar with him in his youth in Paris were aware that part of his moodiness

was due to a first and final profound disappointment in love which he had experienced. He had been desperately enamoured of Marie Leféburе-Wély, daughter of the well-known organist and composer; but she had suddenly decided to marry a man whom, it was said, her parents had chosen for her. Sarasate's tender melody 'Les Adieux', which was addressed to Mlle. Leféburе-Wély, was also an elegy on the death of sentimental love in his own heart. Not only did he remain a bachelor all his life, he became more and more cynical in regard to women. In spite of this he always retained, at least outwardly, the traditional Spanish *caballero's* attitude of gallantry towards members of the fair sex. Leopold Auer, who as a young man knew Sarasate at the height of his fame, observes that the latter always carried a supply of Spanish fans to present to his lady admirers.[4] That many ladies pined for him in hopeless adoration is only what one would expect. Although small in stature he was, as a young man, decidedly handsome and he always bore himself proudly and dressed impeccably.[5] Later he grew somewhat pudgy, yet his large brown eyes never lost their captivating expressiveness. The volume of mail from his feminine admirers increased steadily through the years, but, as Altadill remarks, "the perfumed notes remained unopened".

In 1953, at the Academia de Música of Pamplona, the director, Señor Miguel de Echeveste, kindly allowed me to read a manuscript volume of love letters in the form of a diary addressed to Sarasate. Entitled 'Souvenirs d'une artiste (1886-1904)', it is a series of soliloquies and imaginary conversations which the authoress carried on with Sarasate over a period of eighteen years.[6] In spite of the beautiful and obviously sincere sentiments expressed in these pages, Sarasate is said to have shrugged with indifference when mentioning it. That, of course, does not necessarily mean that he was entirely untouched by such wistful, eloquent devotion. One thing which struck me as particularly interesting was that this French lady, married to a Spaniard, continually spoke of Sarasate as if he also were French. Such sentences as "Tu es l'artiste adoré, la gloire de notre France" appear again and again.

Sarasate was decidedly a "man's man" and had many close friends among the Parisian musicians, many of whom, like him, were graduates of the Conservatoire. He was, for instance, on

[4] L. Auer, 'My Long Life in Music' (New York, 1923).

[5] I have in my possession a rare photograph of Sarasate as a young man which Professor José de Huarte of the Pamplona Academia de Música kindly gave me. A profile, it shows the handsome features of a sensitive young Basque artist.

[6] Feeling that Señor de Echeveste considers this manuscript as confidential, I refrain from giving the name of the authoress.

intimate terms of friendship with Bizet, Saint-Saëns, Lalo, Massenet, Diémer and Franck. During the 1870s, already famous, he made the acquaintance of most of the leading French artists and literary celebrities.

There is no doubt that Sarasate, by the time he was seventeen years old and had won the *Premier Prix* at the Conservatoire, already considered himself more a Frenchman than a Spaniard. Although Spain naturally claimed him as her own, he for his part never ceased to cast backhanded and disparaging remarks at many aspects of Spanish life. His particular grievance was that in musical matters Spain was a *tierra de bárbaros*. But this complaint was not his alone: it was the opinion of many enlightened musicians, both Spaniards and foreigners. In an article entitled ' Sarasate y el arte musical en España ', dated Madrid, June 1900, one of Spain's best-informed musical critics, the Marqués de Alta Villa, writes:

> In Madrid, where one would naturally expect to find the most gifted interpreters of the various arts, including that of the teaching and practice of music, we have in this last field absolutely no official education. That of the Conservatorio de Música y Declamación is an unbelievable disgrace![7]

The French critic Georges Baudin, in an article on " modern " Spanish music published in 1908, puts it thus:

> Spain is a beautiful but indifferent woman . . . And this general, indolent, indifference is especially fatal to musicians.[8]

During his long, glorious, international career as a concert violinist Sarasate always returned to Paris, which was his headquarters and only permanent home. For many years he occupied an apartment in the Rue de Saint-Pétersbourg. Then, in 1884, he signed a long lease on an expensive apartment at 112 Boulevard Malesherbes and engaged Whistler to decorate it for him. When his friends told him that he was foolish to spend so much money on an establishment he could occupy for only a few months a year, he laughed and ironically remarked that the " harmonies " of Whistler's colour-scheme would undoubtedly cost him many a *pizzicato*.

Whistler expressed his desire to do a portrait of Sarasate and, shortly after moving into his new, modernistic, yellow-and-white home, the violinist arranged, between concert tours, to pose several times. There is an interesting reference to this picture, which is considered one of Whistler's best works, in James Laver's biography of the painter. Speaking of the lecture which Whistler delivered in London on modern art before a critical audience in Prince's Hall

[7] Printed in the ' Revista Sarasate ' (Pamplona, July 1900).

[8] ' La Musique espagnole moderne ' (' Bulletin de la Société Internationale de Musique', 15 March 1908).

on 20 February 1885, Laver says that he appeared on the stage " immaculately dressed and looking like his picture of Sarasate ". At approximately the same time that Whistler did this portrait of Sarasate he also did an etching of Stéphane Mallarmé. These three artists were curiously similar in appearance.

Although Sarasate unquestionably understood and appreciated the fine qualities of his countrymen and the picturesque aspects of Spanish life—he was, for instance, an enthusiastic *aficionado* of the bullfight—he never felt really at home except in Paris or in his native town of Pamplona. He went back there every summer for the *Fiesta de San Firmín*, and these visits of their idol were looked forward to by the Pamplonese with joy and pride. To this day his rooms at the Hotel La Perla are kept just as they were when he occupied them.

The Pamplonese always followed from afar with keen interest the triumphs of their hero and in February 1900 proclaimed him *hizo predilecto* (favourite son) of the city.

However, that spring, on his way to fulfil an engagement in Madrid, he suffered an insulting wound to his pride in the form of an article in a Madrid newspaper. The writer, commenting on Sarasate's forthcoming concerts in Spain, attacked him for his lack of patriotism and declared that vanity alone brought him back yearly to Pamplona, where he enjoyed being worshipped as a demi-god. In spite of the wonderful reception given him in Madrid, when the time came for him to go to Pamplona, he insisted upon arriving there incognito. At the Pamplona railway station he drew his hat down over his face and rode alone in a cab to the Hotel La Perla. However, as soon as he descended at the hotel he was recognized. Immediately the news of his arrival spread. The gun salutes which had been ordered for his welcome were fired. Friends rushed to La Perla to surround their hero.

For many years it had been his custom to spend a month or six weeks at San Sebastián or Biarritz following the end of the *Fiesta de San Firmín* at Pamplona. In December 1901 he bought a seaside villa at Biarritz which he named Villa Navarra. It was there that he passed the seven summers which remained to him and there, on 20 September 1908, that he died of the chronic bronchitis which had plagued him for years.

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It is not generally known that Sarasate was one of the first violin virtuosos to make gramophone recordings. I happen to have in my possession two R. C. A. Victor records which, I presume, were made from the oldfashioned cylinders used in those days. On one of them —an abridged version of ' Zigeunerweisen '—Sarasate's voice,

barely audible, is heard in a quick remark to his accompanist. The other record, made, if I remember correctly, for the celebrations connected with the twenty-fifth anniversary of Sarasate's death and designed particularly for Spain and South America, has on one side the ' Zortzico (Miramar) ', Op. 42, and on the other the ' Habanera ' Op. 21 No. 2. This record, which unfortunately proved to be very perishable, is made, I believe, of transparent plastic on a cardboard base and is decorated with floral designs and a photograph of Sarasate holding his violin in playing position. In spite of the age of these recordings they undoubtedly give a very good idea of his style, which reminds me of that of Kubelík, Ysaÿe and Thibaut, all three of whom were renowned for the ingratiating sweetness of their tone and the phenomenal yet casual brilliance of their technique.

During the three years I spent at the University of Paris preparing a doctoral thesis on Richard Wagner[9] I regularly took advantage of the reduced-price concert tickets which were available to students. Hardly a week passed without my hearing at least two violin recitals. I always noted the enthusiastic applause which followed compositions by Sarasate.

It was to learn more about Sarasate and his compositions that I decided to visit Pamplona during my sabbatical leave in the spring of 1953. I also hoped that in Madrid and possibly at Seville I should find material on Sarasate not available in the United States. After Pamplona I planned to visit Paris and to seek further documentation in the library of the Conservatoire and in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

Arriving at Seville from Gibraltar on 12 February, I quickly discovered that the beautiful but at that time bitterly cold Andalusian capital was not the place in which one should expect to learn anything significant about Sarasate or, for that matter, any other musician. Surprisingly, I fared little better in Madrid where I came to the conclusion that for documentation I undoubtedly should have been better off in the Library of Congress. At least I should have been warm there.

One morning at the Academia Nacional de Música I managed to chat for a few minutes with its very busy director, the Rev. Federico Sopeña.[10] When I hopefully mentioned my interest in Sarasate I noticed a look of slightly bored impatience on Father Sopeña's face. Sarasate, he somewhat condescendingly informed me, had written no significant compositions. Even his so-called Spanish dances were not truly Spanish because he had never really understood Spanish music. If I wished to study a Spanish musician I

[9] ' Richard Wagner et le symbolisme français ' (Presses Universitaires de France, 1931).

[10] He is the brilliant author of several very stimulating books on modern musicians, one of which, ' Dos años de música en Europa ' (Madrid, 1942), I was glad to have read.

should have done better, he averred, to turn my attention to Falla, Albéniz or Granados. He made no objection to my remark that more competent critics than I had already written quite extensively on these three composers, but when I attempted to return to the subject of Sarasate he categorically—I was almost going to say phalangistically—cut me short. After this wet-blanket treatment I decided that nowhere in Spain but at Pamplona should the dying embers of my enthusiasm have a chance to burst into flame again.

The following day I left Madrid at 2 p.m. in the little single-coach Auto Via train which provides the fastest service between Madrid and Pamplona. I had been told that the Auto Via trains were very modern, and as I followed my porter along the platform under the big glass roof of the Estación del Norte I rejoiced at the sight of a long, streamlined aluminium train standing on the track marked Pamplona. As I put my foot on the step of the first carriage we reached the porter shook his head and with the air of a tired, disgruntled father forbidding his trailing son to enter a candy shop, dropped one of my bags and impatiently pointed farther down the track. In the distance I now saw a small, squat carriage, bristling like some outlandish insect with the arms, shoulders and heads of passengers. Fortunately I had reserved a seat and was able to squash in beside a portly priest who was mopping the perspiration from his heavy jowls with a black cotton handkerchief.

When I arrived at Sarasate's birthplace at 10 p.m. an icy wind from the Pyrenees was blowing through the deserted streets and the wintry smell of the air seemed more Canadian than Spanish. Driving to the Hotel La Perla I chatted with the friendly driver, who pointed out Sarasate's monument and the tree-lined boulevard named El Paseo de Sarasate. The driver's remark that I should have come to Pamplona during the *Fiesta de San Firmín* was one which I heard many times during my visit there. Pamplona during its *Fiesta* was so dinned into me as an inexorable " tourist must " that I shall probably find myself there some hot July day watching from the safety of La Perla's balcony, as Sarasate used to do, the wild hilarity and near panic of the crowd in the Plaza de Castillo as it scatters before the charging droves of young bulls.

Thanks to the kind hospitality of several distinguished Pamplonese musicians, and particularly of Don José Antonio de Huarte, Don Miguel Echeveste and Don Pedro Turullols, my ten days at Pamplona were the high-light of my six months' European trip. It was through Don Pedro Turullols that I met the members of Pamplona's famous Agrupación Coral de Cámara and was initiated into the beauty of Basque singing.

Don José de Huarte, who in his youth toured extensively as a concert violinist, is the son of one of Sarasate's closest friends, Don Alberto de Huarte. I was delighted to find that Don José had in his possession most of Sarasate's original manuscripts. When I told him that I was interested in ascertaining what popular Spanish melodies Sarasate had used in the composition of his Spanish dances he assured me that if he could not identify them probably nobody else could. Actually, as I soon learnt when going through the manuscripts with Don Huarte, Sarasate continually mingled popular and folk melodies with his own, and sometimes it is next to impossible to say where the one begins and the other leaves off.

We worked in the Professor's studio which, in contrast with the other rooms he showed me in the large, dark apartment crammed like a museum of antiquities with relics of bygone days, was at least partially heated by a little wooden stove. From time to time we would interrupt our work on the manuscripts and the professor, taking his place at the grand piano which stood at one end of the room, would accompany me as I played on his very fine old violin.

The following melodic sources used by Sarasate are the only ones of which Professor de Huarte felt reasonably certain. The ' Caprice basque ': the introduction is based on several motifs of the basque *zortzico* " Desde que nace el dia, hasta que muere el sol ". The third theme of the ' Caprice Basque ' is from the ancient *zortzico* ' Donostiyako iru damatxo ' (' Tres señoritas de San Sebastián '). The duet ' Navarra ' is an adaptation of the *gaitas* (flageolet melodies) traditionally played during the *Fiesta de San Firmín* at Pamplona. The ' Jota Aragonesa ' contains a melody taken from a song to freedom by the Navarrese composer Brull. The first theme of the first ' Habanera (Op. 21) ' is based on a song, " De la patria del cacao, del chocolate y del café " from Fernando Caballero's *zarzuela* ' La Gallina ciega '. The second ' Habanera ' (Op. 26) shows (first theme) influence of the song " Yo me voy a Puerto Rico en un cascaron de nuez " and (second theme) of the *habanera* ' Nena mia ' by Fernandez Caballero. The ' Zortzico basco ' (Op. 37), " Adios montanas mias ", is a Basque air, probably of the nineteenth century. ' Peteñeras ' is a composition based on Andalusian melodies, Professor de Huarte thinks. ' Jota Navarra ' contains motifs from ' El molinero de Subiza ', a *zarzuela* by Oudrid and from the jota ' Viva Navarra ' by Larregla. ' Spanish Dances ' No. 11 (Fischer edition) is inspired by the song by Alvarez, ' La Partida ', " Sierras de Granada, montes de Aragon ".

Sarasate's other Spanish dances, ' Miramar (Zortzico) ', Op. 42, ' Romanza Andaluza ', Op. 22, ' Malagueña ', Op. 21, and

' Zapateado ', Op. 23, Professor de Huarte believes to be more completely original, although showing, of course, the general influence of Spanish traditional music.

It is natural that great romantic violinist-composers of the nineteenth century like Paganini, Wieniawski, Hubay and Sarasate should have used many popular songs, folksongs and folk dances in composing their violin pieces. The peculiar glory of the violin is that it is the singing instrument *par excellence*. Moreover, thanks to *pizzicato* and the various springing bowings it is capable of many pretty effects delightfully reminiscent of the guitar. Probably no violinist-composer ever used the *pizzicato* and *staccato* to simulate guitar or mandolin as effectively as did Sarasate. Paganini's *pizzicati* are usually purely violinistic. This is also true to some extent of Bazzini, although in his famous ' Ronde des lutins ', for instance, the flying *staccati* and *pizzicati* are used with specific programmatic intent. Perhaps Wieniawski more nearly approaches Sarasate in the use of these technical devices, but he had an especial predilection for linked *staccati* used primarily for their decorative effect. Since Sarasate's time *pizzicato* and the springing bow have been used a great deal in violin arrangements of Spanish music. A good example of this is Kreisler's arrangement of the popular dance from Falla's ' La vide breve '.

Among Sarasate's Spanish dances, vying in popularity with his lively ' Zapateado ', Op. 23, is the exquisite ' Malagueña ', Op. 21. I should like to discuss this briefly and without going into too many technical details. As all students of Spanish music know, *malagueñas* are essentially Spanish gypsy music consisting of two component elements, song and dance. Sarasate's ' Malagueña ' opens with a nostalgic melody in D major characterized by the typical descending triplets which lend such poignant sadness to even the gayest of such Spanish melodies. This melody which, on a register two octaves higher, concludes the piece, corresponds to the " song ". After the first statement of this song comes a dance movement, *un poco lento*, of alternating right- and left-hand *pizzicati* interspersed with springing *staccati*. Typical of the *malagueña*, the accented beat is on the first note of each bar. This dance movement is followed by a variation passage in *legato* demisemiquavers of breathtaking beauty. Like the graceful flight of a bird, it comes to rest in a *ritardando* quadruplet of harmonic semiquavers. The first melody is taken up again, ending with another series of demisemiquaver runs which reach their climax on a trill high on the E string and a final *pizzicato* on the open D.

Borrowing a comparison from the words of a popular song, ' A Pretty Girl is like a Melody ', one might say that Sarasate takes a gypsy

girl from a poor quarter of Málaga and presents her on the concert stage, richly gowned and sparkling with jewels. These jewels are, by the way, the technically most difficult passages, which some critics would no doubt scoffingly dismiss as violinistic pyrotechnics.

There would be little point here in describing or analysing other compositions among Sarasate's fifty-four works. That he was an unusually successful adapter for the violin of beautiful popular and folk melodies gives him a place, perhaps not sufficiently recognized, among the great nineteenth-century romantic composers, practically all of whom found their main source of melodic inspiration in the traditional songs and dances of European folk music. It is from this point of view that I shall now discuss Sarasate's historical significance.

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One of the most important early phases in Sarasate's career was his winning over of the severest German critics to an appreciation of himself as a virtuoso and, by implication, of the French school of violin playing. By 1876 he was already famous in France, Spain, Belgium, England, the United States and Argentina. His Parisian friends suggested that it was time for him to accept the challenge of an offer made to him for a concert tour in Germany. If he could win recognition in the " country of music ", they said, he would have established, without question, his world reputation. At the same time, by playing in Germany the compositions of French composers he would do a great service musically to France. At first Sarasate turned a deaf ear to these suggestions. He was too proud to submit himself to the biased judgment of those Prussians! However, the insistence of friends like Massenet and Diémer finally convinced him. He accepted the invitation of the Germans and departed for Berlin. Since at that stage of his career he did not have a regular accompanist but availed himself of the services of first-class pianists in the cities he visited, he was to be accompanied at his Berlin concert by the famous German pianist and composer Otto Neitzel.

It was only five years after the Franco-Prussian war and the traditional conceit of German musicians had been fanned by their country's military victory. Moreover, the memory of the ignominious reception given to Wagner's 'Tannhäuser' at the Paris Opéra in 1861 still rankled. The belief, fostered by anti-French critics, that nothing worthy of notice could be expected of the music or musicians of France had become general. Sarasate's first concert in Germany took place in a small Berlin auditorium before a select, extremely critical audience. Among those present were Hans von

Bülow, then director of the Berlin Philharmonic and ardent disciple of Wagner, the composer Wilhelm Langhans, Woldemar Bargiel, professor of the Berlin Conservatory of Music, and, already mentioned, the pianist-composer Neitzel. The attitude of the audience was both condescending and unfriendly. Sarasate, accustomed to enthusiastic receptions and thunderous applause, was at first intimidated. However, as he began to play—he had chosen as his opening number his friend Saint-Saëns's A major Concerto—his confidence returned. As soon as they hear me, he decided, they will change their minds. Alas, although he played with all his usual fire and technical mastery, the stern Teutons remained unmoved. Moreover, after the concert they completely ignored him. Although most of them could talk French quite well, they pretended ignorance of that language as an excuse for not speaking to him. Only Neitzel and Langhans paid him any compliment: their enthusiasm, in fact, knew no bounds.

The following day Sarasate, who read German with difficulty, eagerly scanned the newspapers. One article, the first he came upon, was moderately favourable; but the second, a long, critical essay in one of Berlin's leading dailies, stung him to anger by its condescending tone and its pointedly insulting panegyric of the art of the great violinists Joachim and Wilhelmj, who, the author averred, were the true artists of the violin. They alone were of a stature to interpret the classical works of the mighty German masters Bach, Mozart and Beethoven. Sarasate's fury was such that he was on the point of packing his bags and returning to Paris immediately. Only after much persuasion by Neitzel, who stressed the argument that his departure would be interpreted as a defeat for French music and musicians, did he finally decide to stay and persist in his effort to win over the German musical public. After several concerts whose success was but indifferent he at last won a great ovation in the famous Gewandhaus of Leipzig. From that time on his fame was secure in Germany, and as the years passed his annual German and Austrian tours became the artistic high-lights of his concert tours.

Not only did the Germans come to recognize Sarasate as a French violinist whose playing of the German classics left nothing to be desired; they also, thanks to him, began to appreciate the works of French composers like Saint-Saëns and Lalo, whose compositions for violin Sarasate made known throughout Germany and Austria. Later, when he had composed his Spanish dances, these were among the most called-for pieces of his German repertory, and German and Austrian violinists who played them were assured of their enthusiastic reception.

It is a well-known fact that composers are usually diffident about admitting that they have received help with the composition of their works. It is thus particularly interesting that Saint-Saëns admitted the assistance he had received from Sarasate. In an article of the 'Revista Sarasate' (a publication of the Pamplona Orfeón Society) for 1 July 1908 Joaquín Larregla quotes the following lines from a letter Saint-Saëns had written to him:

> I wrote for him [Sarasate], at his request, the A major Concerto, to which is given, I don't quite know why, the name *Konzertstück*. Then I wrote for him the 'Rondo capriccioso' in the Spanish style and later the B minor Concerto, for which he gave me valuable advice to which is due, certainly to some extent, the considerable success of this piece.

Further in this same letter Saint-Saëns stated that:

> In circulating my compositions throughout the world on his magic bow, Pablo de Sarasate rendered me the highest of services.

The case of Édouard Lalo is similar in this respect to that of Saint-Saëns. Like the latter he was a close friend of Sarasate. Moreover, as he was of Spanish descent and had a pronounced Iberian love of rhythmic and melodic brilliance, his musical taste, like that of Sarasate, was Latin and exotic. Although as far as I have been able to ascertain Lalo never put his debt to Sarasate in writing, it is taken for granted by such competent authorities as Georges Servières in his biography of Lalo and Gilbert Chase in his volume 'The Music of Spain'. Discussing Lalo's 'Symphonie espagnole' Chase says that at one time Rimsky-Korsakov thought of writing his 'Capriccio espagnol' in the form of a fantasy for violin and orchestra, but, he adds:

> It is just as well that Rimsky-Korsakov did not carry out his original intention—because in that case he would have had to compete with Lalo's 'Symphonie espagnole', one of the most effective works in the entire violinistic repertoire. Lalo had Spanish blood in his veins (though he was born at Bordeaux), and writing his 'Symphonie espagnole' he profited moreover from the help and advice of Sarasate, who gave the first performance of the work at Paris on February 7, 1875.

Quite possibly Sarasate even suggested to Lalo the beautiful Spanish melodies so effectively used in the 'Symphonie espagnole'. However, Servières has nothing to say about this whereas, in speaking of Lalo's 'Rhapsodie norvégienne', first conceived as a sort of counterpart to the 'Symphonie espagnole', he remarks that its themes had been given to Lalo by Sarasate, who had brought them back from Norway following a concert tour in the Scandinavian countries. Whether or not this was the case is probably of slight importance. Themes used by Lalo in the 'Symphonie espagnole',

as I have personally ascertained, are remarkably similar to tunes to be found in collections of Spanish traditional melodies. For instance, several themes of the ' Symphonie espagnole ', and notably of the second movement, *Scherzando*, could easily have been suggested to Lalo by *cantos populares* such as those found in the well-known collection of ' Cantos populares ' by Isidoro Hernández, especially the tenth group of *cantos*, entitled ' Cantos populares gallegos '. Gilbert Chase follows José Altadill and others when he states:

> Sarasate is also reputed to have had a hand in the composition of Bruch's second violin Concerto, ' Schottische Fantasie ', and Mackenzie's ' Pibroch Suite '.

Speaking about Sarasate's original compositions Chase writes:

> As a composer, Sarasate wrote with extreme effectiveness for his instrument, and he was, moreover, one of those who contributed most efficaciously to popularizing " the Spanish idiom " abroad, sharing honors with Albéniz in this respect. His numerous Spanish Dances (both for violin alone and with piano) will long remain in the violinistic repertoire, for they are full of color and charm, as well as of technical brilliance.

Until the year 1860, approximately, the ignorance and indifference of the Parisian public in musical matters was proverbial. When in January of that year Pasdeloup inaugurated his Concerts Populaires, they marked a turning-point in French musical history. In a Parisian newspaper cutting of that period, which I came upon in a folder of Sarasate papers in the Museo Sarasate at Pamplona, the author quotes Pasdeloup as having remarked to Sarasate that he counted on him to help in awakening the public to the worth of French instrumental music. This is particularly significant when one takes into account that French music of the first half of the nineteenth century was almost entirely dominated by opera and the song recital.

It is worth noting that to an extent perhaps not easily appreciated to-day Sarasate's glamour as a supreme virtuoso was very influential in attracting the attention of the Parisian musical public to the works of the French composers he played. In those days an even larger part of a concert audience than is the case to-day was more interested in the artist as a virtuoso than in the music he performed. Indeed, according to the virtuoso tradition illustrated by such great names as Paganini, Liszt and Chopin, it had been expected of the virtuoso that he should play his own compositions almost exclusively. Germany had already broken away more than other countries from that tradition, and this was one of the main reasons for the difficulty Sarasate had experienced in establishing his fame in that country.

We have seen how Sarasate was associated with Saint-Saëns and

Lalo, both of whom were important figures in the Société Nationale des Musiciens Français founded by the former and Romain Bussine in 1871. It is a fact, sometimes overlooked, that it was to the musicians of this society that French music owed its liberation from the obsession of German superiority. Although the neo-classicism of a César Franck and a Saint-Saëns did not escape a tinge of Wagnerism, in the main it represented a reassertion of the traditional French belief in form, simplicity and clarity.

* * *

Since, as is commonly recognized, French folk music played a relatively small part in the inspiring of French nineteenth-century composers, it is not surprising that they found much of their inspiration in the exotic.

One thing clearly stands out, and that is the predominance of the exotic inspiration provided by Spain. Indeed, this is so evident as hardly to need demonstration. A glance at a list of famous French compositions since 1870 should suffice: Chabrier's ' España ', Bizet's ' Carmen ', Lalo's ' Symphonie espagnole ', Saint-Saëns's ' Rondo capriccioso ' and ' Danses espagnoles ', Debussy's ' Iberia ' and ' La Soirée dans Grenade ', Ravel's ' L'Heure espagnole ', ' Rapsodie espagnole ' and ' Bolero ', to name only the best-known.

To anyone who has given much attention to the relationship between music and literature I believe it should be evident that, in spite of the give and take between these two arts, music has more often followed the suggestion of literature than *vice versa*. With opera, of course, this is almost foreordained. Even Wagner, though he said that he would like to think of his music dramas as " the acts of music become visible "[11], nevertheless wrote the libretto of his ' Ring ' long before he composed the music. Obviously, in less programmatic and more abstract music, as in symbolist poetry, this order is not so clear.[12]

Tracing the Spanish suggestion or influence in French literature one finds, as might be expected, that it follows much the same evolutionary pattern as does music. Corresponding to the obvious, popular hispanicism of Lalo and Bizet is that of Hugo in works like ' Hernani ' and ' Ruy Blas ', of Mérimée in his novel ' Carmen ', of Gautier in his ' Voyage d'Espagne '. Later the subtler, more profound hispanicism of Debussy and Ravel is paralleled by the poet Albert Samain's ' Au Jardin de l'Infante ', Maurice Barrès's sensitive and thoughtful description of Toledo in ' Tolède ', etc.

[11] " die ersichtlich gewordenen Taten der Musik ", Coll. Writings, Vol. IX, ' Über die Benennung Musik Drama '.

[12] Mallarmé often thought of his poems as an attempt to express music's suggestion in words.

As we have seen, Saint-Saëns, Lalo, Bizet and Sarasate represented a popular and somewhat superficial Hispanicism. In order to evaluate Sarasate's historical significance one must understand the nature and historical function of this Hispanicism. When Nietzsche turned against his former idol Richard Wagner and published his famous pamphlet ' The Wagner Case ' (1876), he wrote an article after hearing a performance of Bizet's ' Carmen ' in which he says that the Mediterranean clarity of this essentially Latin music was a revelation to him. The heavy clouds of Wagner's " decadent " music were suddenly torn apart and he found himself basking in the joyful, golden sunshine of this light-hearted and passionate Spanish music. Realizing how far he had strayed from simple, wholesome musical beauty, he turned the full battery of his critical artillery on Wagner and all that he stood for. The " melodic poverty " of Wagner's music dramas was symptomatic of its fundamental decadence. Nothing in Wagner was clear, clean, simple and noble. His music was a cloying, aphrodiasic welter of sound, a deleterious bath for the nerves of jaded *Untermenschen*. Essentially pretentious and vulgar, it was heavily soaked in the spirit of petty bourgeois charlatanism.

The personal bias and vehement exaggerations of Nietzsche's article were, unfortunately, so patent that it was dismissed with a smile by competent critics. Nevertheless, it contained more than a grain of truth. Coming from an artistic, intellectual genius of Nietzsche's stature its importance cannot easily be denied. If one is ideologically and sentimentally disposed to agree, at least in part, with Nietzsche and with another denouncer of decadence in modern art, literature and music, Max Nordau, then it is probable that one will be sympathetic towards popular, less sophisticated works.

Since the days of Sarasate, Saint-Saëns and Lalo, not only have Spanish composers like Albéniz and Falla more adequately interpreted the Spanish soul, but similarly French composers like Debussy, Ravel and Aubert have shown a more profound intuition of this soul. In analysing the reasons why, he thinks, the traditional music of Spain made a strong appeal to Debussy, Gilbert Chase expresses himself in a way that suggests interesting psychological implications[13]:

> There were many reasons why the traditional music of Spain made a strong appeal to him, apart from his innate love of the exotic. The survival of the medieval modes, the lack of isometric regularity in the melodies, the shifting and conflicting rhythms, the unorthodox harmonization, with its frequent recourse to consecutive fourths and fifths, the strong contrasts of mood—all these were in line with his own creative instincts.

[13] ' The Music of Spain ' (New York, 1941).

This list of the characteristics of Spanish music which appealed to Debussy reads like the perfect recipe for a strictly " modern " musical composition. It indicates the inspirational happy hunting-ground which Spain and Spanish music became for many modern composers. At the same time it suggests that already with Debussy Nietzsche's far too simple assumption that Spanish music was synonymous with anti-decadent gaiety, light and form was open to many critical reservations. Falla, Albéniz, Debussy and Ravel looked at the Spanish soul and at the techniques of Spanish traditional music through much stronger lenses than did Sarasate, Saint-Saëns and Lalo. And indeed, if one thoughtfully compares the techniques of this traditional music with the subtle, profound psychological undercurrents of the Spanish soul curious parallels begin to emerge.

What are some of these psychological undercurrents of the Spanish soul which only " modern " musicians have been able to express? I should say the mystic and paradoxical, the grotesque, the satanic and the insane. To illustrate, one need only evoke the works of Saint Teresa, Cervantes, Calderón and Góngora in literature, of El Greco and Goya (who sketched those terrifying hallucinations of the Napoleonic war), Picasso and Dali in art, and finally two Spanish institutions, one of which is still very much alive: the Inquisition and the bullfight.

I should like to make one last analogy. Probably the musical critic who glibly states that Sarasate was not a great artist would deal just as harshly in the field of literature with the great popular novelist Vincente Blasco-Ibañez. Although obviously any parallel drawn between these two artists must be severely limited, what can be said is, I believe, important. Both Sarasate and Ibañez spent many years in France and were profoundly influenced by the liberal, cosmopolitan atmosphere of Paris. Both had the proud, essentially masculine nature of the typical Spaniard, and both denounced what they termed the barbarous backwardness of some aspects of Spanish life and culture. While on a vastly different plane, their art, untarnished by decadent, self-conscious, intellectual morbidity, expressed in the idiom of Spain the noble and the eternal.

In Sarasate, haughty violin virtuoso of Pamplona, there was something of the spirit of the Spanish *conquistador*. But his conquests were in the realm of music, his sword a slender violin bow. In 1953 in the cathedral of Saragossa, as I stood gazing at the jewels, the silver and gold *objets d'art* of the cathedral treasury, the guide pointed out Sarasate's bow, upright against a golden chalice. How appropriate that this graceful bow should have come to its long rest among the beautiful tokens of adoration in this sanctuary of La Virgen del Pilar!