sound-world very much controlled by the composer. Allowing someone the artistic freedom to 'make it their own' feels rather like a token gesture when you have equipped them with only a children's 'Whirly' toy and instructed them to 'interweave' their 'sound threads' (as is the case with Sarah Hopkins's 1982 piece *Whirliworks*).

I was occasionally frustrated by the unblinking acceptance of the composers' explanations of their own works, particularly the pseudo-science and ecological posturing offered by a few of the featured sound-artists. Cynical perhaps (or merely prejudiced), but I felt that talk of 'chakras' and the 'collective unconscious,' and Peter Hamel's notion of music offering a route to 'ancient knowledge ... eroded by Western rationality' (p. 73), could have done with more stringent analysis. And it is disappointing that the 'demonstrable scientific fact' that 'scientific fields such as chemistry, atomic physics, [and] crystallography' rely on 'a framework of whole-number ratios such as those perceptible in notes' (p. 74) is used by Kouvaras to support implicitly this notion that music offers a route to some primal or deeper being through its unchanging mathematical power, rather than its cultural power. A large number of pieces claim to represent the 'environment' (natural rather than urban), and even to 'let nature sing for herself,' but there is little exploration of the power relations at work here, and of the cultural capital to be gained in making such a claim.

The final chapters deal with the key premise of the book, and highlight the importance of the 'altermodern' as a means of theorising about contemporary Australian sound-art. Kouvaras notes that much present-day sound-art still retains the modernist-postmodernist tension, with the former represented by 'neo-modernist' sound-artists such as Merzbow. However, this neo-modernism is 'inflected with postmodern elements' (p. 200), reclaiming elements of mass culture, or perverse uses of technology (such as Warren Burt using modern computing power to create a cut-up piece designed to sound like an unedited piano performance). The altermodern allows for 'direct re-engagement with the history of earlier modernisms' (p. 221), rather than high modernism's anti-nostalgic outlook, emphasising sound-art's ability to comment on the present whilst reflecting the past.

Walter Aaron Clark and William Craig Krause.

*Federico Moreno Torroba: A Musical Life in Three Acts*


Reviewed by Ken Murray

The Spanish composer Federico Moreno Torroba was born in 1891 and lived through the Spanish Civil War, the years of the Franco dictatorship and the restoration of democracy that occurred in the years before his death in 1982. His life spanned a period of extreme political and social change, but his musical style and interests remained remarkably consistent throughout his long career.

*Federico Moreno Torroba: A Musical Life in Three Acts* is the first full-length monograph devoted to the composer. Walter Aaron Clark and William Craig Krause have written a musical
biography notable for the depth of historical and political detail woven around the story of Torroba’s life. Clark brings a wealth of experience to this enterprise as the author of definitive biographies of Isaac Albéniz and Enrique Granados, as well as being the editor of the Oxford University Press series, Currents in Latin American and Iberian Music, in which this book appears. Krause completed his PhD dissertation on Torroba in 1993 and much of his research has been incorporated into this groundbreaking work.

Internationally Torroba is best known for his guitar works, and in the Spanish-speaking world he is famous for his zarzuelas (Spanish operettas), most notably Luisa Fernanda (1932), one of the most popular twentieth-century examples of the genre. The importance of the theatre in his musical life inspired the authors to divide the book into three broad sections labeled ‘Acts,’ mimicking the form of the zarzuela grande. Act I covers Torroba’s youth and ends just before the Spanish Civil War in 1932. Act II covers the years of the Civil War and the ensuing dictatorship, offering a detailed examination of Torroba’s political affiliations in the period until 1960. In the final act, the considerable achievements of his productive last two decades are examined. The book is more than a simple chronological survey as each act is split into three ‘scenes,’ the first providing historical context to the period, the second examining Torroba’s life and times, and the final scene devoted to an analysis of relevant compositions. The book is beautifully presented with over fifty musical examples and twenty-nine illustrative plates.

Federico Moreno Torroba provides an in depth but eminently readable survey of Spanish political and cultural life in the twentieth century. Like his contemporary Joaquin Rodrigo, Torroba remained in Spain and pursued a successful career during the Franco dictatorship. The conservative nationalism of his music was compatible with Francoist ideals and, subsequently, his reputation has been tainted by his perceived affiliation with the regime. While this is a murky topic, Clark and Krause argue that Torroba’s alignment with the state was not the product of a natural affinity with Franco’s philosophies, rather that ‘the roots of his style and its philosophical underpinnings were utterly alien to Franco’s prejudices and predilections’ (p. 134). They assert the case for Torroba’s political neutrality and his ability to make artistic decisions independently of political considerations.

Torroba’s musical style changed very little during the course of his professional life. Richly melodic with many features of Spanish national style, his harmonic language was conservative and, as described by Clark and Krause, ‘rooted in the nineteenth century’ (p. 134). In their discussion of Torroba’s musical influences, the authors point to French music such as Bizet’s Carmen, Puccini’s La Bohème and the music of Ravel (p. 86–87). On the Spanish side, a wide range of folk idioms were assimilated by Torroba and he admired the three important pillars of twentieth century Spanish music—Granados, Albeniz and Falla—while maintaining a strong love for the zarzuela repertoire. Musically, the focus of this book is on the two main areas of Torroba’s output: works for the zarzuela and music for the classical guitar.

Throughout his career Torroba retained a close connection to the zarzuela as impresario, composer, conductor and advocate. Clark and Krause document the changing fortunes of the zarzuela in the twentieth century and demonstrate the strength of Torroba’s commitment to

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a distinctively Spanish form of entertainment. He wrote his first zarzuela in 1925 and spent
the next forty years closely involved in writing and producing new works. Luisa Fernanda
was his most successful zarzuela by some margin, although Torroba believed the best works
in the genre to be La Chulapona (1934) and Monte Carmelo (1939). Torroba was clearly troubled
by the decline of the fortunes of the art form in the 1950s and 1960s in Spain, although he was
still able to tour to Latin America many times on the back of the continued popularity of his
works among the creole classes. The authors analyse Torroba’s zarzuelas with support from
well-chosen musical examples and incisive commentary to illuminate the key elements of
Torroba’s writing for the stage.

The guitar is the instrument most commonly associated with Torroba and, although
he did not play the guitar, he had a natural affinity for writing for the instrument, honed
through his numerous collaborations with the Spanish virtuoso Andrés Segovia. Both Clark
and Krauss trained as guitarists and devote considerable attention to Torroba’s substantial
output for the guitar. Torroba wrote his first piece for Segovia, the Danza in E (later to become
the third movement of the Suite Castellana) in 1920. Along with Manuel de Falla’s Homenaje a
Debussy (1920), this was one of the earliest twentieth century compositions by a non-guitarist
for the burgeoning classical guitar repertoire. One of Segovia’s primary aims was to bring
the classical guitar to international prominence and as part of this quest he commissioned
many new works from composers. Segovia’s tastes were very conservative and he rarely
performed dissonant or modernist music, and Torroba’s style matched the conservative
Spanish nationalist approach Segovia favoured. Perhaps the most widely performed of his
guitar works is the three movement Sonatina (1923), which impressed Ravel when he heard
Segovia perform the work in Paris in 1926 (p. 70). Torroba later wrote numerous collections
made up of short pieces, often with evocative titles such as Las Puertas de Madrid or Castillo
de Espana. While their collaboration was mutually beneficial, Segovia could be mean spirited,
and in correspondence with the Mexican composer Manuel Ponce mocked Torroba’s inability
to compose more substantial, larger scale works (p. 277).

In the later decades of Torroba’s life the Romero family of guitarists were great advocates
of his music and he wrote several works for them. Celidonio Romero and his three sons, Pepe,
Angel and Celín, left Spain due to political pressures in 1957 and settled in southern California.
They formed a guitar quartet and Torroba wrote them the Concerto Ibérico in 1976, a concerto
for guitar quartet and orchestra. The three Romero brothers contributed the foreword to this
book and numerous anecdotes, particularly from Pepe, are quoted throughout. A companion
website for this monograph contains interviews with the authors and musical extras, including
an adroit performance of Torroba’s Suite Castellana by Pepe Romero.

The writing style is colourful and engaging, aimed at an audience interested in Spanish
music and history in addition to readers in academia. Clark and Krause assert that Torroba’s
legacy has not yet been fully appreciated and a number of his works, particularly some of the
lesser-known zarzuelas, deserve greater public attention. The authors argue enthusiastically for
a reassessment of Torroba’s position in Spanish music history. In the final section of the book,
the authors declare that Torroba was unique among zarzuela composers because his music also
gained recognition in the concert hall, citing a 1890 review by George Bernard Shaw that scorned
concert works by Ruperto Chapí and Tomás Bretón (p. 292–3). This was a review of a concert
organized by Isaac Albéniz with the aim of introducing a greater variety of Spanish music to
the London public, and much of the negative criticism was due to preconceived notions of what constituted ‘true’ Spanish music being challenged by some items in the program. Bretón also moved successfully between the world of the zarzuela and the concert hall and a number of his concerts works, such as the symphonic serenade *En la Alhambra*, have been revived in recent years. However, this is a minor quibble in the context of a wide-reaching exploration of the Spanish musical identity and politics in the twentieth century.

While the revival of his zarzuelas will depend on the fortunes of the genre in the coming decades, a new generation of performers have shown a keen interest in the guitar music of Torroba and this repertoire might be his greatest legacy. With this book, Clark and Krause not only offer a welcome reappraisal of Torroba’s life and music, but also illuminate a misunderstood and neglected period in Spanish music history.