

A repertoire to be discovered from Classicism to Jazz: salon music in Barcelona between 1800 and 1920

Musical Heritage Concert on the occasion of the 575th anniversary of the University of Barcelona

PROGRAMME

Carles Baguer (1768-1808)

Rondó en La Mayor (ca. 1800)

Sonata en Fa Mayor (ca. 1800)

Works from the Rare Book and Manuscript CRAI Library – University of Barcelona Ms

1378. *Libro de sonatas de diferentes autores recogidas por Fr. Joaquín de J.M.J.*

Carmelita Descalzo.

Mateu Ferrer (1788-1864)

Cancioncita española con acompañamiento de forte piano (1843)

Canción con acompañamiento de forte piano en Mi Mayor (ca. 1845)

Works from the Rare Book and Manuscript CRAI Library – University of Barcelona

Ms 2061. *Diverses obres musicals.*

Felip Pedrell (1841-1922)

Quand Mignon passait (1879)

Isabel Güell y López (1872-1956)

Rima (1898)

La rosa marcida (1915)

Clifton Worsley (1872-1925)

¡Isma! (1915)



The programme of this concert proposes a journey through the transformation of musical taste in Barcelona over more than a century. Through a selection of pieces ranging from late Classicism to the emergence of modern jazz rhythms, we witness the shift of musical practice from sacred and ecclesiastical spaces of power to the domestic sphere and the new spaces of civic and commercial sociability: the bourgeois salon and the ballroom.

The musical journey begins with two pieces by **Carles Baguer (1768–1808)**, organist of the Cathedral of Barcelona and a key composer in the introduction of the Classical style in Catalonia. Although his musical career was institutionally linked to the Cathedral of Barcelona, part of his compositions, such as the two works presented here (the Rondo in A Major and the Sonata in F Major), clearly depart from liturgical function in order to fulfil an aesthetic purpose for a bourgeoisie that was beginning to demand music to be performed in salons and domestic spaces.

The two pieces by Baguer, from the musical collection of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library of the University of Barcelona, are conceived for the fortepiano and are framed within the galant style and the international Classicism prevailing in early nineteenth-century Europe; that is, music with simple, symmetrical melodic lines built on basic antecedent–

consequent phrases; a predominance of melody with accompaniment and a lesser use of counterpoint than in earlier periods; regularity and balance between thematic blocks through the principle of recapitulation or re-exposition (presenting the first section of the work again at the end, with or without variation, after a contrasting middle section). Consequently, the structure is closed and cyclical, balanced, and aurally clear and stable. In this sense, the **Rondo in A major** stands out for its freshness and for a clear structure that directly appeals to the period taste for elegant melody and contained virtuosity. The **Sonata in F major**, in turn, shows a Baguer who fully masters the bipartite and tripartite sonata form, placing him on a par with the great Central European models of composers such as Franz Joseph Haydn and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.



Excerpt from the Rondo in A major (Allegretto) by Carles Baguer (1768–1808), preserved in the music collection of the Rare Books and Manuscript CRAI Library of the University of Barcelona, Manuscript 1378 (fols. 6r–7r).

The next stop in this musical journey is the music of **Mateu Ferrer (1788–1864)**, a composer who embodies the versatile, multifaceted musician

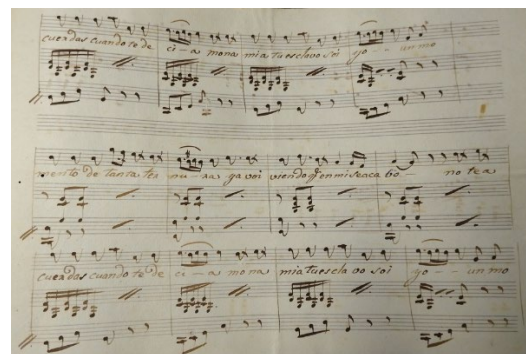


characteristic of nineteenth-century musical culture: in 1808 he succeeded Carles Baguer as principal organist of the Cathedral of Barcelona; in 1827 he became musical director of the city's opera house, the Teatro de la Santa Creu in Barcelona, from where he led the introduction of European Romantic operatic repertoire (V. Bellini and S. Mercadante) and consolidated the Rossinian repertoire; and from 1829 onwards he served as chapel master of the Cathedral of Barcelona, combining religious and theatrical activities. His output therefore includes sacred music (masses, cantatas, motets), symphonies, operatic arrangements, songs for voice and piano, and piano works (sonatas, variations and rondos). The two works for voice and piano in this programme place us at the heart of domestic intimacy and the bourgeois salon, in those musical practices carried out by amateurs—especially women—who used music (particularly piano pieces or songs for voice and piano) as a primary vehicle for sociability and leisure.

In the «**Cancioncita española**», with a clear Rossinian flavour, Ferrer stylises popular elements through a cultivated lens, while in the «**Canción en Mi Mayor**» he unfolds a melodic line that reveals his experience as an opera conductor and composer. In both songs—whose lyricist is unknown—the voice seeks affective expression and the melodic narrative typical of the lyrical genre that triumphed on stage. The piano, far from acting merely as an

accompanying bass, becomes an active interlocutor, characteristic of the lied or art song genre.

These two pieces by Ferrer, recently discovered, are part of the music collection of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Barcelona and, to date, they are the only two works of this genre preserved by this composer.



Excerpt from «**Cancioncita española**» by Mateu Ferrer (1788–1864), preserved in the Rare Book and Manuscript CRAI Library of the University of Barcelona, Manuscript 2050.

This musical journey also takes us to Barcelona in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, through the lieder (art songs) of the composer, pedagogue and musicologist **Felip Pedrell Sabaté** (1841–1922) and the composer **Isabel Güell López** (1872–1956). In the case of Pedrell, his most valuable legacy lies both in his creative output and in his theoretical and pedagogical work. He advocated the creation of a distinctive musical identity based on Spanish folklore and popular tradition. He was the direct teacher of figures such as Isaac Albéniz (1860–1909), Enrique Granados (1867–1916), and



Manuel de Falla (1876–1946), transforming the course of Spanish music history. He also undertook a monumental task in recovering Spain's early musical heritage. The lied included in the programme, «**Quand Mignon passait**», with a text by the writer J. T. de Saint Germain (1805–1868)—pseudonym of Jules-Romain Tardieu—takes us to a crucial period in Pedrell's life, the so-called «French option» (1873–1879), during which he distanced himself from the hegemony of Italian opera and embraced the *mélodie* française and the German lied. This work shows a Pedrell seeking greater unity between word and music, using denser pianistic textures and harmonically daring language.

Likewise, the composer Güell, Marchioness of Castellidosrius, was a prominent figure of the Catalan modernist generation. She received solid artistic training in Paris with Eugène Gigout. Her musical output, characterised by remarkable consistency, includes chamber music, piano works, sacred music and song, setting texts by contemporary poets such as Jacint Verdaguer, Miquel Costa i Llobera and Apel·les Mestres. Her works were performed in Barcelona's leading venues, including the Palau de la Música. She was also deeply socially committed, leading philanthropic initiatives for the protection of women. The two works featured here, «**La rosa marcida**»—with text by Jacint Verdaguer (1845–1902)—and

«**Rima**»—with text by Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer (1836–1870)—are examples of a refined sensibility that avoids clichés. In them, the piano does not simply mark the rhythm but creates a psychological atmosphere that envelops the voice, demonstrating that for women of the upper bourgeoisie, composition was a space of intellectual agency and a way of actively participating in artistic modernity from within the salon.

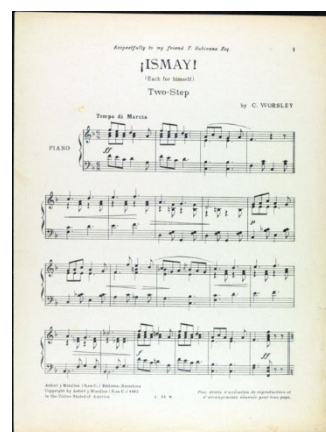
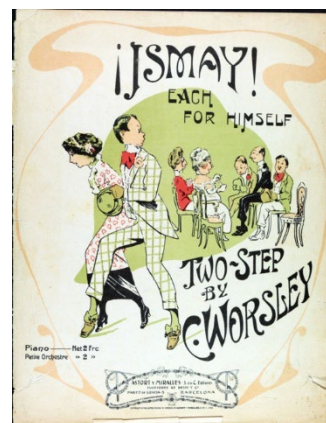
The relationship between Pedrell and Güell symbolises a chain of knowledge transmission: the teacher, striving to professionalise national music and elevate the status of song, found in students such as Isabel the ideal performers and creators to disseminate this new aesthetic. Listening to these works together allows us to appreciate how the Barcelona salon became a space of avant-garde experimentation, where the lied served to explore the most intimate emotions and demanding poetic texts, consolidating a repertoire that we value today for its unquestionable artistic merit and academic rigour.

The programme concludes with an aesthetic rupture that defines Barcelona's entry into the cosmopolitan modernity of the twentieth century. This stage is marked by the figure of **Pedro Astort y Ribas (1872–1925)**, a musician, publisher and music dealer in Las Ramblas who, under the pseudonym **Clifton Worsley**, became the main introducer of new



American rhythms in Spain. Astort epitomises the success of «fashionable» music: short, danceable pieces designed for mass consumption, successful both in bourgeois and aristocratic salons and in the venues of Barcelona's Paral·lel, known as the «Catalan Montmartre». The piece we will hear today, «*¡Ismay!*», is an exceptional testimony to this shift in paradigm. It was first published by the composer himself (Barcelona: Astort y Miralles, 1913)—although its copyright was registered in 1915—and bears the subtitle *Each for himself* («every man for himself»). Musically, this early “two-step” in F major, *Tempo di Marcia*, reflects a Texan social dance originating in country ballrooms, characterised by its smooth circular movement around the floor (quick–quick–slow–slow), and here marketed for piano or small orchestra. To facilitate performance, the score includes occasional ‘ossia’ passages (indicating alternative musical options). As a surprising effect intended to engage the audience, the instruction «frapper avec les mains sur le bois du piano» (‘strike the wood of the piano with the hands’) is added. The composition ranges from the initial *fortissimo* (**ff**) through *piano* (**p**), followed by a *crescendo* leading to the triple *forte* (**fff**) or final *fortississimo*. All of this makes *¡Ismay!* a pioneering work in its early association with the label «jazz» (specifically *jazz fox-trot*) in Spanish printed editions. Worsley, who absorbed these rhythms from American sailors arriving at the port of Barcelona,

successfully translated ragtime, the shimmy and the blues to European taste, creating a product that was at once exotic and sophisticated.



Cover and first page of *¡Ismay! Each for himself*, by Clifton Worsley, pseudonym of Pedro Astort y Ribas (1872–1925). Barcelona: Astort y Miralles, 1913.



PERFORMERS

Ana Cristina Vicente Pimpinela

Soprano

A versatile soprano, passionate trainer of young singers and conductor of various vocal ensembles in Aragón. She is widely known for her passion for opera and stage music, in which she has specialised through numerous artistic experiences, taking on leading roles in zarzuela, opera, performances and musical productions in venues, festivals and theatres throughout the country.

She has been part of numerous vocal groups specialising in early and contemporary music such as Chiavette and Enchiriadis GVF (National Choral Singing Grand Prize 2010), and collaborates regularly with national ensembles in concerts and recordings (music for documentaries, theatre, television spots and museum installations) across various styles, including Saulus Ensemble, Camerata Orquesta, Stella Splendens, María de Melo Producciones, Novum Organum, Teatro del Temple and Ensemble Arquivolta. She has also collaborated with ensembles such as Música Ficta, Los Músicos de Su Alteza, Ariadna Ensemble, Fònics, El Canto de las Vihuelas and El Trovar de los Afectos in different projects.

Her versatility has led her to record premiere works such as *Setiembre* (Luis Pedro Bráviz/Enchiriadis), *Ignominia* (Ralph Killhertz/Medialab Prado), the complete works of Eva Ugalde (Alaia Ensemble), the soundtrack for the choreographic work “Los días de Penélope”, and the music for “Edipo” (Gonzalo Alonso), as well as medieval incidental music for the documentary on the Crown of Aragon “La roca en el mar”, soundtracks for the documentary “Panteones Reales Aragoneses” for the Government of Aragón, and the album *Nodum* (Saulus Ensemble), awarded the Melómano de Oro in May 2024.

She is currently a professor at the Conservatorio Profesional de Música de Monzón.



Manuel Grande

Piano

He holds a degree in piano from the Conservatorio Superior de Música de Aragón and the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna (2015). He has studied with teachers such as David Kuyken, Imre Rohmann, Tünde Kurucz, Josep Colom and Klaus Maetzel, among others. He completed a Master's in Teacher Training at the University of Zaragoza (2016) and a Master's in Musical Performance and Research at the International University of Valencia (2017). He obtained his PhD *cum laude* (2025) from the University of Castilla-La Mancha (UCLM), under the supervision of Antonio Ezquerro Esteban and Luis Antonio González Marín (CSIC). He has participated in several conferences and published articles in specialised musicology journals.

As a teacher, he has worked in several conservatories in Aragón and in 2025 obtained a permanent piano position at the Conservatorio Municipal de Música de Zaragoza. He has performed concerts in Spain, Portugal, France, Austria and Italy with various ensembles. He actively participates in modern music and jazz projects in Zaragoza such as Astrokids, B Quark and Viki Lafuente. In 2018 he recorded the six sonatinas of Nicolás Ledesma and regularly collaborates with the Research Group on Musical Heritage of the University of Barcelona (GEPAM-UB), recording on historical keyboard instruments.

