

Introduction

On 30 July 1840, the small brig *Carmen* arrived in Callao, the old harbour of Lima. Eleven artists, most of them Italian and one Cuban arrived on the ship from Havana via the ports of Panama, with the dream of establishing an opera company in the capital of Peru. In Peru, however, no one expected their arrival: the news came with Cuban newspapers aboard that same ship.¹ As far as we know, Italian opera had been performed in Peru before, including by two Italian singers in 1812, as well as by a small travelling company in 1831. This time was different: the singers travelled from Cuba, a well-known operatic centre, and the troupe was a professional group, with at least one prominent Italian star (Clorinda Corradi), and her husband, a conductor-impresario willing to develop a permanent operatic scene (Raffaele Pantanelli). As one account put it eight years later, in the Andes the arrival of the Pantanelli company, as it would be known, kick-started a period of ‘pleasure in which our knowledge and passion for opera became generalised’.²

There were a few false starts. The first negotiations in August 1840 were not easy; there was pressure from local dramatic actors and politicians to prioritize Peruvian and Spanish-speaking productions over a foreign company. Some feared that history would repeat itself: there would be some performances, for which people would pay a lot of money, and then when the troupe left, local artists would be in the difficult position of resuming their work under unfair comparison.³ To appease the rabble-rousers, the contract between the managers of the local theatre, and Pantanelli, the impresario, was published in the main local newspaper, *El Comercio*.⁴

The company performed for the first time on September 2, and the two main newspapers of Lima, *El Comercio* and *El Amigo del Pueblo*, dedicated a full page each to discuss their performance of Bellini’s *I Capuleti*, sold locally as *Romeo y Julieta*: ‘The opera exceeded everything we had hope for.’⁵ The Pantanelli company performed in Lima until 1844, when the singers, reinforced with new voices in 1842 and 1843, moved to Chile to continue performing in other Andean cities. During the 1840s members of the Pantanelli company performed operas – often for the first time – in almost all major Andean cities, in countries like Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia: Guayaquil, Arequipa, Lambayeque, La Paz, Talca and Copiapo. The theatres that were built at the time of their performances, and the local, regional and transatlantic networks they developed, set the groundwork for operatic, drama and zarzuela

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/1706a9a38fb24beca2ea526e07b7a0ff>

Readers can follow the story of the opera companies working in the Andes during the 1840s through this ArcGIS Storymap, specially prepared as an accompaniment to this Element.

¹ *El Comercio*, Lima, 10 August 1840. ² *El Comercio*, Lima, 25 April 1848.

³ *El Amigo del Pueblo*, Lima, 11 August 1840. ⁴ *El Comercio*, Lima, 8 August 1840.

⁵ *El Amigo del Pueblo*, Lima, 3 September 1840.

performances well into the twentieth century. Even more, many of those singers stayed in the Andes for life, becoming key figures in the creation of local and regional cultural scenes, well beyond the frameworks of Italian opera performances.

This Element is about that early process of reception of Italian opera and Italian opera artists in the Andes. It is a key period, when Italian opera, its repertoire, artists and modes of production, were becoming global, as it has been recognized by recent scholarship.⁶ A focus on Latin America and specific regions of Latin America, as Paulo Kühn and Axel Körner have recently suggested, might be particularly important to opera and music theatre scholarship today, since it ‘allows for a critical assessment of the postcolonial condition of opera production’ in new nations that ‘continued to maintain close relations with Europe’.⁷ The question, of course, is what does a critical assessment of the postcolonial condition of opera production look like. As a borderline, a ‘frontier’ of operatic expansion in the age of early imperialism, Italian opera in the Andes during the 1840s allows us to focus on opera not as a granted and accepted cultural form. Italian opera was not imposed, and its global character was not entirely obvious. It had to gain a place, becoming a force for conflict, a product both challenging and being challenged by other forms of performing arts, cultural businesses and entertainments.

There has been much research and interest in operatic reception outside Europe in the early twenty-first century. In part, the interest in operatic reception extends the idea that opera is, by its very nature, ‘a historically situated synthesis of means and artistic expressions that can mediate and transcend temporal, geographical and social boundaries’.⁸ In the words of Suzanne Aspden, ‘opera’s cultural mobility has allowed it to be used to negotiate, heighten, and at times transcend boundaries of identity’, a process that was just as potent in Europe as when ‘opera was exported to other territories, as a marker in various ways of European civilization and power’.⁹ It is not only that opera became tremendously important for Latin American politics and culture. Latin America became tremendously important for operatic history during the nineteenth

⁶ Benjamin Walton, ‘Italian Operatic Fantasies in Latin America’, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 17 (2012), 460–71; Suzanne Aspden (ed.), *Operatic Geographies: The Place of Opera and the Opera House* (University of Chicago Press, 2019); Mark Everist, *The Empire at the Opéra: Theatre, Power and Music in Second Empire Paris* (Cambridge University Press, 2021). Also, coming from theatre studies, Christopher Balme, *The Globalization of Theatre 1870–1930: Theatrical Networks of Maurice E. Bandmann* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

⁷ Paulo Kühn and Axel Körner, *Italian Opera in Global and Transnational Perspective: Reimagining Italianità in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 8.

⁸ Roberta Montemorra, *Operatic Migrations: Transforming Works and Crossing Boundaries* (Routledge, 2017).

⁹ Aspden, *Operatic Geographies*, 9.

century; in particular for companies that could work, for example, in Cuba, Rio de Janeiro and/or Buenos Aires, benefitting from a summer season during the European winter, working between Italian seasons.¹⁰

Recent studies on the early reception of opera in the broader American and Caribbean region have shown that there is much to be learned from the period.¹¹ My focus is, however, more specifically on the Andes and the South Pacific region of the Americas. In terms of operatic reception, the Andes has been much less explored and researched than Brazil, the United States, Mexico or Argentina, countries well connected to the Atlantic and, thus, to Europe and an established notion of ‘transatlantic’ culture. The Andes serves as the backbone of South America, crossing the continent in a north–south Axis. It separates nations bordering the Atlantic from those connected to the Pacific, including Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile. While Colombia, like Venezuela, could be considered part of the Andes, it is not included in my framework here, since it has been traditionally dependent on the Caribbean, because of the position of its main port. For most of the nineteenth century, its operatic connections were more Caribbean than Andean.¹²

Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile, however, are firmly defined by the Andes. For those interested in migrating to the Andes during the nineteenth century, the region presented a series of challenges and opportunities that are slightly different to those in other parts of the Americas. Travelling to the Andes from the Atlantic was only possible through three different routes, all of them dangerous: through Panama’s ports and then alongside the Pacific coast, on horseback through the Argentinean Pampas, or by crossing the dangerous Cape Horn alongside Tierra del Fuego. Only in the 1840s did steamship travel allow for regular connections between these countries, bypassing the difficult and arid landscapes that cover the coasts of Peru and the north of Chile, as well enormous distances involved: steamers connected a new maritime network of port cities

¹⁰ Ditlev Rindom, ‘Bygone Modernity: Re-imagining Italian Opera in Milan, New York and Buenos Aires, 1887–1914’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2019); Matteo Paoletti, *A Huge Revolution of Theatrical Commerce: Walter Mocchi and the Italian Musical Theatre Business in South America* (Cambridge University Press, 2020). See also from Matteo Paoletti, ‘La red de empresarios europeos en Buenos Aires (1880–1925): Algunas consideraciones preliminares’, *Revista Argentina de Musicología* 21 (2020), 51–76.

¹¹ Pierpaolo Polzonetti, *Italian Opera in the Age of the American Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2011); Charlotte Bentley, ‘Resituating Transatlantic Opera: The Case of the Théâtre d’Orléans, New Orleans, 1819–1859’, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (2017); Francesco Milella, ‘Italian Opera and Creole Identities: Manuel García in Independent Mexico (1826–1829)’, in Paulo Kühn and Axel Körner (eds.), *Italian Opera in Global and Transnational Perspective: Reimagining Italianità in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 77–95.

¹² Rondy Torres, ‘Tras las huellas armoniosas de una compañía lírica: La Rossi-D’Achiardi en Bogotá’, *Revista del Instituto Carlos Vega* 26 (2012), 161–200.

bordering the Andes, roughly 4,500 kilometres from Guayaquil in Ecuador to Valparaiso in Chile, or the equivalent of driving from Lisbon to Moscow in a straight line.

As former Incan domains as well as former holdings of the Viceroyalty of Peru, these countries shared a long cultural, administrative and economic history. By the early 1800s, there were also enormous political, economic and social changes in the Andes. The Wars of Independence, fought during the 1810s and 1820s, fixed the borderlines of those new nations, and their early Republican histories. Lima, which had been the administrative and cultural centre during colonial times, lost ground during the 1830s to the new regional capitals (Quito, Sucre and Santiago) as well as to emerging ports, like Valparaiso and Guayaquil. The mythical allure of Peru, however, was still enormous, with stories about its wealth, and that of Potosi in Bolivia, freely circulating the globe. By the 1830s Valparaiso, on the coast of Chile, was the largest port on the South American Pacific coast, with a large population of immigrants from European nations.¹³ Thus, performing artists slowly realized that, in terms of opera, there was enough interest in the region to make the trip worthwhile.

In comparison with research on the Caribbean and the Atlantic Coast of South America (Brazil and Argentina), there has been very little research on opera in the Andes. Particularly so for the period discussed here, the 1840s and 1850s.¹⁴ But operatic reception in the Andes in the 1840s complicates the general assumptions about ‘global opera’ during the nineteenth century. By 1840, the foundations for the transatlantic operatic trade had been already established in other parts of the Americas, more accessible from Europe, like the southern Atlantic Coast (Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires) or the Caribbean and Circum-Caribbean region (Havana, New Orleans, Mexico City), as well as in the East Coast of the United States. But the Andes were widely seen as one of those ‘last frontiers’ for the establishment of operatic taste. The development of steam travel, as we will see, was essential to that process, since a stable connection

¹³ In terms of Valparaiso as an economic port for the region, see the comments of Jorge León, *Evolución del comercio exterior y del transporte marítimo de Costa Rica 1821–1900* (Editorial Universidad de Costa Rica, 1997), 55–65. One of the best papers on commercial organizations in Valparaiso in this period, with more detailed information, is Eduardo Cavieres, ‘Estructura y funcionamiento de las sociedades comerciales de Valparaiso durante el siglo XIX (1820–1880)’, *Cuadernos de Historia* 4 (1984), 61–86.

¹⁴ In terms of new perspectives on Italian opera and Italian opera reception in the Atlantic Coast of South America (Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina), but with a focus on the final decades of the nineteenth century, see Anibal Cetrangolo, *Ópera, barcos y banderas: El melodrama y la migración argentina* (Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 2015); as well as the dossier edited by Vera Wolkowicz for the *Revista Argentina de Musicología* (2020, Volume 1), which includes chapters on the subject by Wolkowicz, Paoletti, and Walton.

between seaports became a fundamental element in developing a stable network for performing practices like opera.¹⁵ I consider the 1840s as a foundational period of operatic practices in the Andes, when the genre changed from being one amongst others to a central feature of local cultural scenes. When seen retrospectively, the Pantanelli company set the foundations for a permanent operatic scene not only in Lima, but more generally in the Andean region.

For Italians in search of new lands to conquer for their operatic empire, the arrival of the Pantanelli company in the Andean region was a sign that ‘our Italian opera is most certainly on the expansion’, as the Milanese newspaper *Il Pirata* put it in 1844.¹⁶ As a not-yet-unified country, Italy could not compete with the growing imperial expansion of European nations. Opera in turn often served as a mediated or indirect form of imperial project, what historians nowadays call an ‘informal empire’: based not on political or military domination, but on economic and cultural domination of networks, goods and ideas.¹⁷ As Lucy Riall has argued, Italians in places like mid-nineteenth-century Lima ‘thought and behaved colonially’, because of their use of routes and networks, and their consciousness of the power and hierarchies of human mobility.¹⁸

But the empire of opera, like many other European imperial projects at the time, was only successful after a ‘war’ for domination; after battling and conquering several other forms of entertainment, amongst which it was only one more during the 1840s: Italian opera competed against the Spanish *tonadilla* tradition, musical comedies, dramatic companies, popular music and dance, as well as bullfighting. Opera, and opera singers, were not always welcomed with open hands, and the development of networks, businesses, audiences and a market for opera was a contested and difficult job, sometimes read as a form of cultural imposition. However, that was not necessarily so: we have to abandon the idea that operatic reception was a passive exercise. The agency of singers was central, overcoming disease and danger, moving to the other side of the world, overcoming the local resistance to opera. But the agency of audiences and brokers was also essential, in many different ways that, I hope, I will show through this Element.

In the following sections, I will explore these different issues, based on a decade of archival research in Ecuador, Chile, Peru and Bolivia, as well as

¹⁵ Michael Walter, *Oper: Geschichte einer Institution* (J. B. Metzler, 2016), 120.

¹⁶ *Il Pirata*, Milan, 4 January 1844.

¹⁷ Jessie Reeder, *The Forms of Informal Empire: Britain, Latin America, and Nineteenth-Century Literature* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2020).

¹⁸ Lucy Riall, ‘Un “Imperial Meridian” in Peru: Appeal, commercio e scienze dell’imperialismo informale italiano, 1848–1890’. Paper presented in the X Cantieri di Storia Sissco, Modena, 18–20 September 2019. www.sissco.it/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Riall-Imperial-Meridian.pdf (Revised March 2022).

in Italy: how opera became relevant to new audiences, how it was canonized beyond European borders, how networks were developed, how theatres adapted to new business models and how technologies, politics and economics affected the availability of opera singers. I hope that this Element conveys something of the careful groundwork needed to lay the foundation of a new operatic scene. What I consider essential when thinking about opera ‘abroad’ in the mid-nineteenth century is that we cannot take the reception and expansion of Italian opera during this period for granted: it certainly didn’t feel so to those working, listening or performing it beyond European shores in the 1840s. Each new city, each new work, each new way of dealing with the business of operatic performance, could (and often did) lead to failure. Looking at the Andes in the 1840s, it is my hope to show the very human actions that made opera possible in nineteenth-century Latin America.

1 Music and Theatre in the Andes Around 1840

Unlike Europe and other parts of the Americas, which already had expectations for Italian opera, in the Andes kick-starting an Italian opera scene was no easy task. Italian opera, during the 1840s and 1850s, was a hugely disruptive cultural force in the Andean region, even beyond urban centres. During the 1840s, as one contemporary writer put it, ‘opera became a necessity’ for the definition of contemporary, modern culture.¹⁹ But the process by which it became a necessity was an arduous one. But to understand that disruption, we have to look at the context into which it arrived. Italian opera had to compete directly with entrenched local customs that were tied to a Spanish colonial past. Its success was determined by the kind of experiences in music theatre people had, what audiences might have expected of theatrical evenings, and the infrastructure that sustained such practices, which Italian opera used, learned from and irreversibly transformed in the span of a decade.

The idea that opera was disruptive, however, might not be entirely obvious when reading contemporary sources. Newspapers are the most important source for research on the study of nineteenth-century opera in Latin America. But one can be easily misled by those newspapers. Looking at early reviews in the Andes, it could seem as if Italian opera arrived into a vacuum, a blank theatrical slate in which it was instantly recognized as the only performing medium worthy of praise and respect. As one newspaper put it in 1840, just after the arrival of the Pantanelli company: ‘opera is the most beautiful of ornaments for a capital city . . . the most admired of arts, making us proud of the human spirit and its ingenuity’.²⁰ After the first operatic performance in 1842 in Guayaquil,

¹⁹ *El Comercio*, Lima, 25 April 1848. ²⁰ *El Amigo del Pueblo*, Lima, 4 August 1840.

Ecuador, the local newspaper stated that ‘Opera, as a goddess, chooses a simple building, perhaps safe and decent, and with a touch of its wand transforms it into a temple’.²¹ When the Pantanellis arrived in Chile, in 1844, celebrated writer and politician Domingo Faustino Sarmiento wrote that the groundbreaking experience of live Italian opera was that of ‘civilization in its most refined degree’.²²

Sarmiento’s quote is symptomatic of this early period of operatic reception. By the end of the century, and with the background of large urban migrations from southern Europe, Italian opera would be perceived by Latin American intellectual elites as a genre for ill-educated migrants. But in the 1840s, for the elites and middle classes of urban Latin America, opera was still considered in terms of both education (as theatre was in colonial times) and Europeanization as a form of modernity. Indeed, this was a period of rapid Europeanization, in customs, ideas and fashions. Central Europe served as a model, a way of becoming modern while, at the same time, defining that modernity in direct contrast to Spain and the colonial past. Thus, in newspapers, Italian opera was often used as a way of highlighting the contrasts between local culture and the imagined and idealized possibilities of a more European Latin America. And to go back to Sarmiento: he wrote that quote while serving as the preeminent opera critic in Chile, when the Pantanelli company arrived in 1844. At that same time, he was also finishing his most influential book, *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism*. In that book, Sarmiento used the notions of civilization and barbarism as poles to identify trends that defined, according to him, contemporary Latin American culture. Barbarism was the Indigenous, the rural, the Spanish, the colonial; civilization was the modern, the urban, Europe, Italian opera.

But Italian opera, even if heralded as the vanguard of civilization in the form of European culture, arrived in a theatrical context still shaped by colonial structures, institutions, buildings and forms of entertainment. For example, it had to be performed in colonial theatres. There were many theatres in the late-colonial Andean region, perhaps only the one in Lima could have been called a proper theatre. Most theatrical venues, traditionally known as *coliseos* or *corrales*, were temporary buildings, often without a roof, and certainly without orchestra pit. Lima’s theatre, a model for others in the region, was built in 1766, during the government of Viceroy Manuel de Amat. Amat, grounded in the ideas of Enlightenment, certainly believed that theatre and music could serve not only to entertain but to civilize and create morally grounded citizens.²³

²¹ *Correo Semanal de Guayaquil*, Guayaquil, 25 September 1842.

²² *El Progreso*, Santiago, 27 April 1844.

²³ Rolando Rojas, *Tiempos de carnaval, el Ascenso de los popular a la cultura nacional, Lima 1822–1922* (Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos, 2005), 45.

With the expulsion of the Jesuits during Amat's period, and the enormous lack of literacy in the population, theatre and music were perceived as ways in which moral ideas could be communicated in an efficient way. According to Rolando Rojas, what was promoted was the learned stage: 'while other forms of representation were censored, like comedies and parodies of saints' lives . . . theatre was considered the best way to communicate specific ideas and values, educate the people into moral and civic ideas'.²⁴ This way of thinking about the theatre as a public space had serious implications, as we will see, for later ways of appreciating Italian opera during the nineteenth century.

Amat believed that music and plays had to be preferred over other forms of entertainment, like street performances, and bull and cock fighting.²⁵ The theatre was perceived as a place for education, particularly for the illiterate masses. Its impact is statistically self-evident: at the top of its capacity, a theatre like the Coliseo in Lima, even by the 1830s, could fill 4 per cent of the adult population of the city. It was four times more than the reach of any of the local newspapers.²⁶ However, as a venue, it left much to be desired. In the opinion of Henry Wise, an English traveller in 1849, 'the immense rafters that uphold the flat roof are apt to keep a nervous person in the pit somewhat anxious and uneasy, anticipating a shock of the tremor. It is sufficiently commodious, but badly ventilated, dimly lighted, and without decorations'.²⁷ Wise also complained about the abundance of flies, as did the German traveller Johann Tschudi, who attended a play in 1838.²⁸ Locals didn't have a much better opinion of the venue: Manuel Atanasio Fuentes, in his *Sketches of Lima*, considered that, while it could hold up to 1,500 persons, in reality it was 'altogether unworthy of a civilised nation'.²⁹ Basil Hall, who visited the place in the 1820s, gives us a more detailed look at the place:

[The Coliseo in Lima is] of a rather singular form; being a long oval, the stage occupying the greater part of one side, by which means the front boxes were brought close to the actors. The audience in the pit was composed exclusively

²⁴ Rolando Rojas, 'La república imaginada: representaciones culturales y discursos políticos en la independencia peruana (Lima, 1821–1822)', unpublished MA thesis, Universidad Mayor de San Marcos (2009), 58.

²⁵ Juan Carlos Estenssoro, 'La Plebe Ilustrada: El Pueblo en las Fronteras de la Razón', in Charles Walker (ed.), *Entre la retórica y la insurgencia: Las ideas y los movimientos sociales en los Andes, siglo XVIII* (Centro Bartolomé de las Casas, 1995), 55.

²⁶ Mónica Ricketts, 'El teatro en Lima y la construcción de la nación republicana (1820–1850)', unpublished BA thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Lima (1996), 49.

²⁷ Henry August Wise, *Los Gringos, Or an Inside View of Mexico and California, with Wanderings in Peru, Chili and Polynesia* (R. Bentley, 1849), 395.

²⁸ Johann Jakob von Tschudi, *Peru: Reiseskizzen aus den Jahren 1838-1842* (Scheitlin und Zollifoker, 1846), 60.

²⁹ Manuel Atanasio Fuentes, *Lima: Or, Sketches of the Capital of Peru* (Trübner, 1866), 70.

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of men, and that in the galleries of women . . . the intermediate space was divided into several rows of private boxes. Between the acts, the Viceroy retires to the back seat of his box, which being taken as a signal that he may be considered as absent, every man in the pit draws forth his steel and flint, lights his cigar, and puffs away vigorously, in order to make the most of his time; for when the curtain rises, and the Viceroy again comes forward, there can no longer be any smoking, consistently with Spanish etiquette. . . . The Viceroy's presence or absence, however, produces no change in the gallery aloft, where the goddesses keep up an unceasing fire during the whole evening.³⁰

Inside that venue, and other less prominent theatres in Santiago, or Guayaquil, or La Paz, there had been, until the 1840s, very few opportunities to see Italian opera performed on a stage by professional Italian singers. There had been opera in the Andes for a long time: indeed, the earliest opera composed in Latin America is *La Púrpura de la Rosa*, premiered in 1701 with music by Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco. But, as far as we know, only in 1812 there was for the first time a season of Italian opera in Lima, sung in Italian and performed by Italian singers: Pietro Angelelli and Carolina Griffoni, who came from Europe and previously sung, apparently, in Buenos Aires and Montevideo.³¹ They worked alongside successful actors and actresses, like Rosa Merino, and under the direction of the music director of Lima Cathedral, the Italian cellist Andrea Bolognesi, who most probably arranged for their visit and the repertoire, consisting of operas by Cimarosa and Paisiello.

The period between the arrival of Angelelli and Griffoni in 1812, through the performances of the Schieron and Pizzoni company in the early 1830s, down to the arrival of the Pantanelli company in 1840, was one of enormous disruption to local musical practices. On the one hand, Italian opera created an economic disruption, making much more money than it was usual for local artists. Already in 1812, Pietro Angelelli, in a public letter defending himself of several accusations from the manager of the theatre, wrote that, while 'no one imagined here that Italian opera singers could arrive', and 'while we only worked on days in which no *comedias* were performed', opera made much more money in a month that would have been expected from any previous season.³²

On the other hand, Italian opera reshaped tastes and practices. In Spain, the issue of Italian opera disrupting local practices had become thorny already in the late eighteenth century. Many tonadillas made fun of Italian teachers, 'Italian'

³⁰ Basil Hall, *Extracts from a Journal: Written on the Coasts of Chili, Peru, and Mexico, in the Years 1820, 1821 and 1822* (A. Constable, 1826), Volume 1, 108–9.

³¹ Pedro Angelelli, *Habiendo llegado a nuestras manos* [. . .] (Imprenta de los Huérfanos, 1812). Original preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional del Perú, code 4000001577.

³² Angelelli, *Habiendo llegado a nuestras manos*.

melismatic singing in the Neapolitan style, or Italian opera more directly.³³ At the turn of the century, a protectionist move by Charles IV of Spain sentenced that ‘in no theatre in the realms of Spain can there be pieces performed in a language that is not Spanish, or by actors and actresses that are nationals of these realms’.³⁴ The Napoleonic wars debilitated the protectionist move but, at least between 1800 and 1808, there was a direct prohibition for any musical theatre that was not in Spanish, fostering the popularity of Spanish forms of entertainment, the repertoires that would later set the foundations of the romantic zarzuela tradition.

Andean cities were influenced by practices and repertoires in the viceregal capital of Lima; and Lima, in turn, by trends in Spain. There were two predominant forms of musical theatre in Andean stages at this time, against which Italian opera had to compete directly: *comedias* and *tonadillas*. *Comedias* were plays in which certain parts were sung by performers, mostly *commedia dell’arte* in style, but also some with religious topics (*comedias de santos*). Religious comedies, frequently not very saintly and often censored by the Catholic church, were extremely popular. In Lima, for example, the most popular piece in the 1820s and well into the 1830s was a comedy with songs, *El diablo predicador* (The Preaching Devil), which was often proscribed by the Church and attacked by the press.³⁵ A handful of songs coming from some of these plays can be found today in the Biblioteca Nacional del Perú, with educational texts set to the kind of music also found in the tradition of the *villancico*, sacred music in vernacular language.³⁶

On the other hand, *tonadillas* were a form of short musical play, lasting from 10 to 20 minutes, extremely popular in Spain and its colonies during the second half of the eighteenth century and, in certain regions like Venezuela, well into the 1840s.³⁷ *Tonadillas* were often performed in between acts from larger dramas, or at the beginning or the end of an evening. There was an important reason for the popularity of *tonadillas*: like Italian *intermezzi*, they were often

³³ Elisabeth Le Guin, *The Tonadilla in Performance: Lyric Comedy in Enlightenment Spain* (University of California Press, 2013), 76, 102.

³⁴ For the original document, see José Garriga, *Continuación y suplemento del Prontuario de don Severo Aguirre* (Librería de don Valentín Francés, 1802), 323–7.

³⁵ Ricketts, ‘El teatro en Lima’, 34. The piece also parodied an influential piece of dramatic theatre, also titled *El diablo predicador*, written by Luis Belmonte Bermúdez, who lived in Mexico and Peru in the seventeenth century.

³⁶ The Biblioteca Nacional del Perú has a large collection of music manuscripts from the nineteenth century that has only been partially catalogued. I was able to consult the music thanks to the help of Laura Martínez, then head of collections in the National Library, but it is not accessible for the general public.

³⁷ Montserrat Capelán, ‘La tonadilla escénica en Venezuela o el proceso de criollización de un género hispano’, *Anuario Musical* 72 (2017), 137–52.