

The Arrival of the Zarzuela in Budapest *El rey que rabió* by Ruperto Chapí¹

Gloria A. RODRÍGUEZ-LORENZO

University of Oviedo
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras
c/ Teniente Alfonso s/n, 33011 Oviedo, Spain
Email: rodriguezgloria@uniovi.es

Received: June 2019; accepted: November 2019

Abstract: The appearance of zarzuela in Hungary is entirely unknown in musicology. In the present study, I discuss the currently uncharted reception of the zarzuela *El rey que rabió* (first performed in Spain in 1891) by Ruperto Chapí (1851–1909), a Spanish composer of over one hundred stage pieces and four string quartets. Premiered as *Az unatkozó király* in Budapest seven years later in 1898, Chapí's zarzuela met with resounding success in the Hungarian press, a fervour which reverberated into the early decades of the twentieth century. Emil Szalai and Sándor Hevesi's skilful Hungarian translation, together with Izsó Barna's appropriate adjustments and reorchestration, accordingly catered the work to Budapest audiences. Through analysis of hand-written performance materials of *Az unatkozó király* (preserved in the National Széchényi Library), alongside a detailed study of the Hungarian reception, the profound interest in Spanish music – particularly in relation to musical theatre – amongst the turn-of-the-century Hungarian theatre-going public is revealed. This paper explores how *Az unatkozó király* became a success in Hungary.

Keywords: zarzuela, operetta, Ruperto Chapí, reception history, Emil Szalai, Izsó Barna

1. Operetta or Zarzuela?

The terms zarzuela and operetta appear interchangeable in recent international scholarship.² This is partially explained by the shared characteristics between

1. Research for this essay formed part of the project “Microhistory of Spanish Contemporary Music: International Peripheries in Dialogue” (PGC2018-098986-B-C31), and the Research Group “Music, Science & Culture” (HUM1001).

2. See, for example, Janet L. STURMANN, *Spanish Operetta, American Stage* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000); or Richard TRAUBNER, *Operetta: A Theatrical History* (New York etc.: Routledge, 2/2003 [1/1983]).

these genres, such as spoken dialogue interspersed with musical numbers, or their entertaining function as musical spectacles. Nevertheless, zarzuela and operetta subtly differ; although boundaries between the genres are often undefined, they nevertheless represent separate phenomena. Modern zarzuela, usually constructed in three acts, also referred to as *zarzuela grande* [great zarzuela] first appeared in mid-nineteenth-century Spain. The success of Hernando's *Colegialas y soldados* [Schoolgirls and soldiers] is considered the starting point of the revival of the genre: initially it originated in the Baroque era, and it was essentially reinvented in the nineteenth century.³

Italian opera held a monopoly on the contemporary Spanish music industry.⁴ Audiences demanded this repertoire, and Italian influences extended from theatres and halls to caf  s, and dominated domestic music-making through (largely piano and voice) transcriptions. The popularity of Italian opera represented more than a trend, it became a cultural identity marker associated with the elite education enjoyed by the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. Institutions such as the Conservatoire of Madrid (founded in 1832) were also strongly influenced by Italian musical traditions. Throughout the nineteenth century, many Spanish composers (such as Arrieta, Bret  n and Chap  ) completed their academic training in Italy, wrote their works in Italian (for example, Bret  n's *Gli amanti di Teruel* of 1889), or even translated them into Italian (as with Serrano's *Giovanna la Pazza*, 1890); in the latter case, this could secure a work's premi  re in Spanish lyric theatres. Accordingly, Barbieri, Gaztambide, Oudrid, Fern  ndez Caballero and many other Spanish composers including Chap  , utilized Italian operatic influences in their zarzuelas, alongside borrowed elements from French *op  ra comique*, and infused with popular Spanish musical elements such as *jota* and *seguidilla*.

Since the premi  re of Offenbach's *Orph  e aux enfers* in 1864 (translated and adapted for Spanish audiences as *Los dioses del Olimpo*), zarzuela also encompassed influences from European operetta. As a result, the impresario Arderius, who had encountered Offenbach's operettas in Paris in 1865, founded a lyric company *Bufos Madrile  os* [Madrilenian buffos], modelled on the *Th   tre des Bouffes-Parisiens* which was established in the Teatro Variedades [Variety Theatre] in Madrid. He offered adaptations of Offenbach's operettas, and promoted zarzuela composition following Offenbach's model. The first piece entitled *El joven Tel  maco*, composed by Rogel and with lyrics by Blasco, premi  red in 1886. Arderius maintained the company until 1880, staging operettas by Charles Le-

3. Encina CORTIZO, "Zarzuela," in *Diccionario de la M  sica Espa  ola e Hispanoamericana*, ed. by Emilio CASARES (Madrid: SGAE, 2002), vol. 10, 1145–1160.

4. One example demonstrating the popularity of Italian opera in Spain is Emilio Casares's article: Emilio CASARES RODICIO, "Rossini: la recepci  n de su obra en Espa  a," *Cuadernos de M  sica Iberoamericana* 10 (2001), 35–70; see also Francisco J. GIM  NEZ-RODR  GUEZ, "De Rossini a Verdi: aproximaci  n al repertorio oper  stico italiano en Andaluc  a oriental durante el siglo XIX," in *Intercambios musicales entre Espa  a e Italia en los siglos XVIII y XIX*, ed. by V  ctor S  NCH  Z S  NCH  Z (Bologna: Ut Orpheus Edizione, 2019), 439–459 (= *Ad Parnassum Studies*, vol. 11).

cocq and Edmond Audran following the Offenbach trend.⁵ Viennese operetta also emerged in Spain in the 1880s.⁶

Meanwhile, shorter zarzuelas, referred to as *género chico*, started to appear between 1868 and 1915. Single-act works (akin to Offenbach's early operettas) with plots relating to contemporary politics and Madrid society, these zarzuelas were met with huge successes. This repertoire quickly became a musical craze in Spain, maintaining momentum until the century's close. These shorter zarzuelas encompassed diverse forms, entitled variously *sainete lírico*, *revista* [variety show] and also operetta: terms which were difficult to define, especially because many composers blended and combined their characteristics. *Género chico* seamlessly fit hour-long performances in Spanish theatres, and proved exceedingly popular with audiences on account of their comical plots, narrating contemporary urban affairs. These pieces showcased everyday characters from Madrid's districts and quintessential archetypes representing the Spanish provinces, complemented by Spanish rhythms from set pieces such as *seguidillas*, *habaneras*, *boleros*, *pasodobles*, as well as from popular urban genres, such as the *waltz*, *habanera*, *mazurka* or *schottische*. Such numbers were popular amongst the middle and working-class audiences who frequented theatres in their leisure time, and who enthusiastically supported zarzuela. Simultaneously, these zarzuelas (as well as the *buffo* genre provided by Arderius' company) aligned fittingly with contemporary political and economic tensions, resulting from the frequent alternation of governing parties, as well as the Spanish revolution of 1868, which dethroned Isabel II.⁷ Impresarios viewed *género chico* a lucrative means through which to offer zarzuela on a limited budget.

Considering these contexts, the substantial success of *género chico* is unsurprising. The demand for this genre exploded between 1880 and 1910, with thousands of one-act zarzuelas performed in more than eleven theatres.⁸ Famous titles have retained their popularity until today, such as Chueca and Valverde's *La gran vía* [The great avenue] (1886), Chueca's *Agua, azucarillos y aguardiente* [Water, sugar cubes and moonshine] (1887), Bretón's *La verbena de la Paloma* [The festival of Paloma] (1894), or Chapí's *La revoltosa* [The naughty one] (1897).

5. ENCINA CORTIZO, "Zarzuela," 1145–1160; Serge SALAÜN, "La zarzuela, híbrida y castiza," *Cuadernos de Música Iberoamericana* 2–3 (1996–1997), 235–255; Ignacio JASSA HARO, "Con un vals en la maleta: viaje y aclimatación de la opereta europea en España," *Cuadernos de Música Iberoamericana* 20 (July–December 2010), 69–128.

6. Spanish musicologists have noted that the early twentieth century was the period in which Austro-Hungarian operetta became popular in Spain. See JASSA HARO, "Con un vals," 76. However, recent studies have noted that adaptations of Franz Suppé's operettas were well received throughout the 1880s. See Andrea GARCÍA TORRES, "Franz von Suppé en España: la recepción de su obra lírica en el contexto de adaptación de la opereta vienesa," in *Teatro Lírico Español. Ópera, drama lírico y zarzuela grande entre 1868 y 1925*, ed. by M^a Pilar ESPÍN TEMPLADO, Pilar de VEGA MARTÍNEZ and Manuel LAGOS GISMERO (Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación Distancia, 2016).

7. Emilio CASARES RODICIO, "Historia del Teatro de los Bufos, 1866–1881. Crónica y dramaturgia," *Cuadernos de Música Iberoamericana* 2–3 (1996–1997), 73–118.

8. ENCINA CORTIZO, "Zarzuela," 1145–1160.

Despite the rise of the *género chico* repertoire, some composers such as Fernández Caballero or Chapí continued to composed three-act zarzuelas, drawing eclectically from several influences, including French opera and operetta and Italian and Wagnerian opera,⁹ interspersed with various characteristics from Spanish musical traditions.¹⁰ Evidently, few composers achieved significant acclaim with modern zarzuela in a theatrical context where *género chico* was unchallenged in its success. This was apparent with regard to Chapí's *El rey que rabió* [The king mad with rage], and a factor behind its adaptation for the 1898 Budapest première, seven years following its extraordinary first Spanish performance in the *Teatro de la Zarzuela* [Zarzuela Theatre] on 20 April 1891.¹¹

2. Spanish Culture in Budapest: Preparing for Chapí's Zarzuela

Spanish culture was familiar in Hungarian society by the late nineteenth century, and retained its novelty until the early twentieth century.¹² From 1892 the journal *Magyar Újság* published a literary collection titled *A Magyar Újság regénycsarnoka*.¹³ Several Spanish short stories and novels were published in a separate volume named *Spanyol elbeszélők* [Spanish storytellers] (see *Plate 1*) in 1895.¹⁴

Emil Szalai, renowned for introducing Spanish literature to Budapest, translated a selection of works by celebrated Spanish authors, such as José Echegaray, Emilia Pardo Bazán or Joaquín Dicenta.¹⁵ As a lawyer, Szalai was also an expert in copyright and legal issues connected with stage performance. He maintained contact with Juan Valera, the Spanish ambassador to Vienna between 1892 and 1895.¹⁶ Valera was a prolific campaigner for copyright protection in Spanish theatres,¹⁷ and a recognised writer of repute in his own right (one of his famous works,

9. Research by José Ignacio García Suárez discusses the presence of Wagner's music in nineteenth-century Spain. See, for example, José Ignacio GARCÍA SUÁREZ, "La recepción de la obra de Richard Wagner en Madrid entre 1861 y 1876," *Cuadernos de Música Iberoamericana* 10 (2001), 71–95; id., "La recepción de la obra de Richard Wagner en Madrid entre 1877 y 1893," *Cuadernos de Música Iberoamericana* 14 (2005), 73–142; id., "Centros y periferias en la recepción wagneriana en España en el siglo XIX," in *Musicología global, musicología local*, ed. by Javier MARÍN LÓPEZ, Germán GAN QUESADA, Elena TORRES CLEMENTE and Pilar RAMOS LÓPEZ (Madrid: SEdeM, 2013), 1407–1420.

10. ENCINA CORTIZO, "Zarzuela," 1139–1160.

11. For discussions concerning the Spanish première of *El rey que rabió*, see Luis G. IBERNI, *Ruperto Chapí* (Madrid: Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, 1995) (= *Música Hispana. Textos*); Ruperto CHAPÍ, *El rey que Rabió*, critical edition by Tomás MARCO (Madrid: Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, SGAE, 1996) (= *Música Hispana. Partituras*).

12. Francisco J. GIMÉNEZ-RODRÍGUEZ, "De Falla's Hungarian Success: *A háromszögletű kalap* (1928)," *Studia Musicologica* 59/3–4 (December 2018), 309–321.

13. "A Magyar Újság regénycsarnoka," *Magyar Újság* 15/14 (14 January 1893), 16.

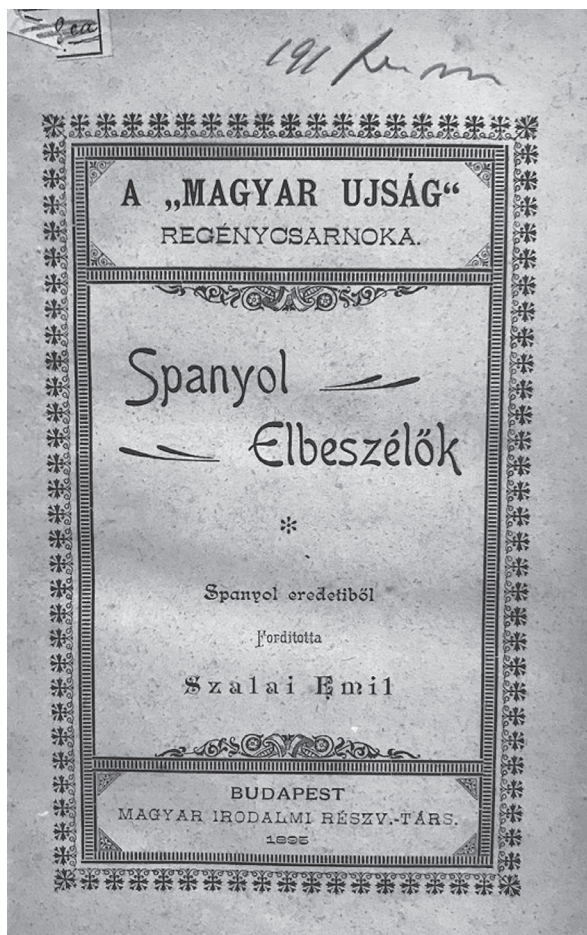
14. Emil SZALAI, *Spanyol elbeszélők* (Budapest: Magyar Irodalmi Rt., 1895).

15. "Irodalom," *Ország-Világ* 16/13 (31 March 1895), 206.

16. "Cronología de Juan Valera," *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes*. <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/juan_valera/autor_cronologia/> (Accessed 28 November 2019); F. OLIVER-BRACHFELD, "Juan Valera et l'Autriche-Hongrie," *Bulletin Hispanique* 41/2 (December 1939), 142–152.

PLATE 1 Emil Szalai, *Spanyol elbeszélők*.

Reproduced by kind permission of the National Széchényi Library, Budapest



Pepita Jiménez, is the basis for Albéniz's eponymous opera). Szalai requested his permission to publish his work in *Spanyol elbeszélők*.¹⁷ As with Spanish literature, Valera possibly also drove the wider distribution of Spanish music. His writings concerned with copyright issues in opera and zarzuela – concerns which Chapí shared – were published in Spanish journals, and Valera also participated in founding the Spanish Authors Society. Consequently, it appears that the ap-

17. See, for example, Juan VALERA, "Pleito literario," *La Ilustración Española y Americana* 42/47 (22 December 1898), 364–365.

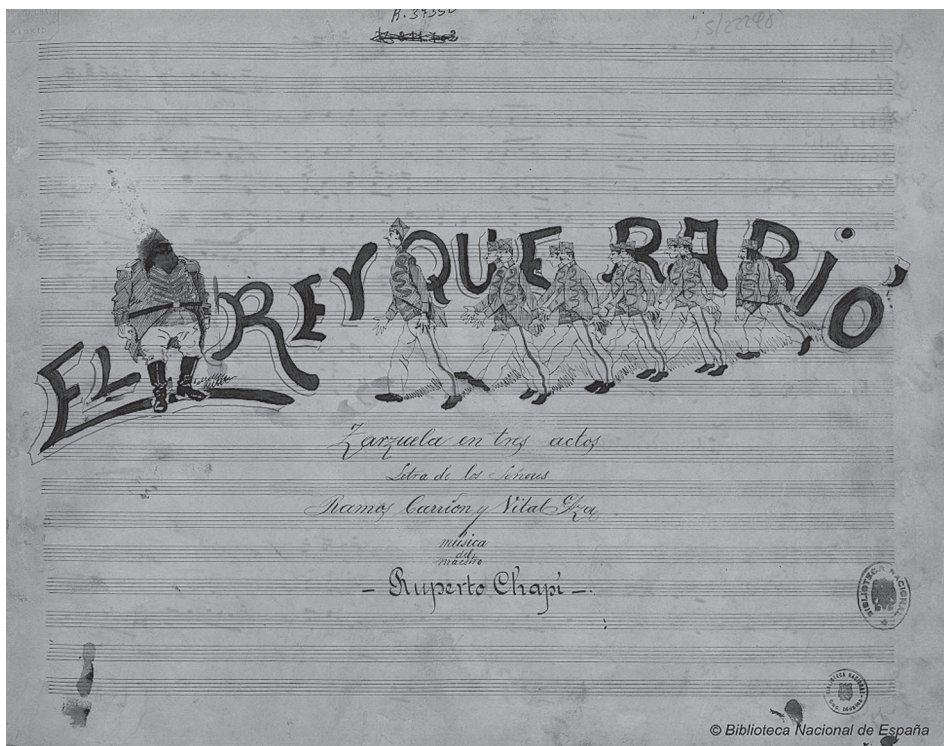
18. OLIVER-BRACHFELD, "Juan Valera et l'Autriche-Hongrie," 142–152.

pearance of Chapí's works in Austro-Hungarian territories concurrently to these developments was not incidental.¹⁹

Chapí's zarzuela *La Bruja* (1887) was performed in Prague. Its adaptation, translated into Czech as *Carodejka*, was published in 1895.²⁰ According to scores held in the archive of the Vienna Carltheater, his previous zarzuelas, such as *Mujer y reina* [Woman and queen] (1895), were likely also performed in Vienna,²¹ as was *El rey que rabió*.²²

PLATE 2 Ruperto Chapí, *El rey que rabió*

Reproduced by kind permission of the Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid



19. Some musicologists, such as Andrew Lamb, have noted that Chapí's zarzuelas were completely unknown in Europe. See Andrew LAMB "European Operetta and the Works of Chapí," *Ruperto Chapí: nuevas perspectivas* Víctor SÁNCHEZ SÁNCHEZ, Javier SUÁREZ PAJARES and Vicente GALBIS LÓPEZ (Valencia: Institut Valencià de la Música, 2012), vol. 2, 11–21.

20. Ruperto CHAPÍ, *Carodejka. Velka narodni zarzuela o 3. dejstv. (Die Zauberin. Grosse Volkszarzuela in 3 Acten)* (Praha: Hyenek, 1895).

21. Ruperto CHAPÍ, *Mujer y reina. Zarzuela en 3 actos. Letra de D. A. M. Pina Rodríguez*, reduction by A. SANTAMARÍA (Madrid: Editor Pablo Martín, 1895), A-Wn, shelf mark: MS7604-4° MUS MAG.

22. Ruperto CHAPÍ, *El rey que rabió. Zarzuela en 3 actos. Letra de los Sres. Miguel Ramos Carrión y Vital Aza*, reduction by A. SANTAMARÍA (Madrid: Editor Pablo Martín, 1891), A-Wn, shelf mark: MS7605-4° MUS MAG.

At the end of 1897, the Hungarian press announced that the *Népszínház* [Folk Theatre] would stage two Spanish works which had achieved great success in Spain: *Juan José*, a drama by Joaquín Dicenta, and *Az unatkozó király*, an operetta “written by Chapí, the most popular Spanish composer, translated by Emil Szalai.”²³ The Hungarian press identified Chapí’s work as equally an operetta and a zarzuela, demonstrating the tendency to conflate these terms outside Spain.²⁴ Spanish composers were mindful when defining their works, selecting tailored descriptions including “drama lirico;” “sainete;” “revista,” and “zarzuela,” by contrast to the umbrella terms commonly used across Europe. These differentiations were strongly influenced by the discourse – ongoing since the mid-nineteenth century – seeking to differentiate between Spanish opera and zarzuela. Chapí described *El rey que rabió* as a three-act zarzuela (see *Plate 2*);²⁵ nevertheless, this work has been considered to be an operetta by subsequent musicians and musicologists.

The Hungarian press displayed keen interest in Chapí’s zarzuela, announcing this work as the first Spanish operetta to premiere in Hungary.²⁶ Kálmán Porzsolt, Director of the Folk Theatre and a journalist for the *Pesti Hírlap*, facilitated this production: Porzsolt held the rights to perform several operettas (including *Az unatkozó király*), mostly through agreements with agencies operating in the Paris theatres.²⁷ Some pieces from Chapí’s zarzuela were published prior to performance, such as the “Francia négyes” (French quadrille, no. 3), in *A zenélő Magyarország*.²⁸ *Zeneművek jegyzéke*²⁹ also published the musical numbers from the first two acts prior to the Hungarian premiere (see *Plate 3*).

Rehearsals began in November of 1898. The Hungarian press focused on Chapí, identifying him as one of the most significant Spanish musicians then composing “Spanish operetta, that it is to say, zarzuela.”³⁰ The press also mention the translators Emil Szalai and Sándor Hevesi, and that Aranka Hegyi would perform the leading role as the young King.³¹ However, *Az unatkozó király* was delayed

23. “[A] legnépszerűbb spanyol zeneszerző írta, szövegét Szalai Emil fordítja.” “Irodalom és művészet,” *Pesti Napló* 2/342 (10 December 1897), 9.

24. One example could be seen in “Színház és zene,” *Pesti Hírlap* 9/341 (10 December 1897), 6.

25. Digital version is available in Biblioteca Digital Hispánica: <<http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000008453&page=1>> (Accessed 28 November 2019).

26. “Színház, művészet,” *Budapesti Napló* 3/33 (2 February 1898), 10; “Színház, művészet,” *Budapesti Napló* 3/307 (7 November 1898), 5.

27. “Irodalom és művészet,” *Alkotmány* 3/142 (15 June 1898), 7–8; “Színház, művészet,” *Budapesti Napló* 3/221 (11 August 1898), 8; “Színház és zene,” *Pesti Hírlap* 20/222 (12 August 1898), 5.

28. “A zenélő Magyarország,” *Zalamegye* 27/36 (4 September 1898), 170; “Művészet, irodalom,” *Pécsi Figyelő* 26/203 (7 September 1898), 6; “Irodalom és művészet,” *Mohács és Vidéke* 17/37 (11 September 1898), 7.

29. *1898-ik évben a magyar korona országaiban megjelent zeneművek jegyzéke*, ed. by Gábor KATONAI MAGYAR ([Budapest] s.n., s.a.), 170.

30. “[S]panyol operett, úgynevezett zarzuela lesz.” “Irodalom, színház, művészet,” *Magyar Újság* 7/311 (9 November 1898), 7.

31. *Ibid.*; “Irodalom és művészet,” *Pesti Napló* 49/310 (9 November 1898), 11; “Irodalom, művészet,” *Magyarország* 5/312 (10 November 1898), 8.

PLATE 3 Nos. of *Az unatkozó király* quoted in
A magyar korona országaiban megjelent zeneművek jegyzéke (1898)

- Chapi R.** *Az unatkozó király.* Spanyol operette. Szövegét írta Carrion Ramos M. Fordította Szalai Emil és Hevesi Sándor. 1. füzet. 1. Keringő. 2. Tango. (Spanyol dal). 3. Mazurka (apród-kar). 4. Baile. (Spanyol táncdal). 5. Idylle pastorale. . . 6. Barna Izsó. Örült vagy szent? (Couplet). Ének és zongorára. Budapest, Rózsavölgyi és társa. 1 frt 80 kr.
- II. füzet. 7. Szívem aranyálma. (Spanyol dal). 8. Induló. 9. Románc. 10. Mazurka. (Aratódal). 11. Barna Izsó. Spanyol táncdal. . . 12. Barna Izsó. Induló. . . Ének és zongorára. U. o. 1 frt 80 kr.
- *Az unatkozó király,* francia négyes. Cigány-zenei vezérkönyv. Budapest Klökner Ede. 1 frt 50 kr. netto.
- Ugyanaz. Zong. Ld.: *Zenélő Magyarország.* V. évf. 17. füz. 3. sz.

PLATE 4 Playbill of the first Budapest performance of *Az unatkozó király*
 Reproduced by kind permission of the National Széchényi Library, Budapest

NÉPSZINHÁZ.

Budapest, szombat, 1898. december 10-én

először:

AZ UNATKOZÓ KIRÁLY.

Spanyol operetta 3 felv. előjátékkal. Írta Miguel Ramos Carrion és Vital Ana. Fordította Szalai E. és Hevesi S. Zenejét szerzte Chapi.

Személyek:

A király —	F. Hegyi Árpád	Az elnök követe —	Torrey
A hadgyarmaster —	Németh	1-6-1	S. Hermann Emma
A tengerész —	Solymsi	2-4-1	Malina Emma
A pénztárnyszer —	Ujvári	3-4-1	Baki Marika
A helygyarmaster —	Vollaci	4-4-1	Károlyi Katica
Egy kapitány —	Kassai	Lorenz, János csodáló	Siráj
Egy tiszt —	Kovács	1-6-1	Gundel
Juan, tanyagazda —	Hortkötő Y.	2-4-1	Hortkötő
Mária, a feleség —	M. Csász Zolt	1-6-1	Bay
A falu királya —	Kiss M.	2-4-1	Sorposi
Róna —	Z. Bátyó Gábor	3-4-1	Dési
Jermás —	Váder	4-4-1	Kabosai Y.
A miniszter követe —	Vérsai	Kürtő	Hegyesi
Az angol követe —	Lakosy	(tízosa)	Szalai

Détárolók, névvezetők, parancsok, parancsok, azok, katonák, apródok, palatölők, katonák, táncosok — Vörösköz az előjáték a királyi palatölök, az első felvétel egy felvétel, a 2-4 felvétel, egy kasszafőző utazás és egy tanyán, a 3-4 felvétel, a királyi palatölök.

Pénztárnyitás 6, kezdete 7 órakor.

Helyárak:

Főlelteli pálya 10 frt — Főlelteli 3 frt — I. rangú szék 1 frt 80 kr. — II. rangú szék 1 frt 60 kr. — Kisebbségi 1 frt 20 kr. — Zárószék 1-III sor 80 kr. — A 1000 sor 80 kr. — A 1000 sor 80 kr. — I. emeleti pálya 9 frt. — Főlelteli 2 frt 60 kr. — I. emeleti 1-3 sor 1 frt 50 kr. — A 1000 sor 1 frt. — II. emeleti pálya 6 frt. — Főlelteli 1 frt 80 kr. — II. emeleti 1-3 sor 1 frt. — A 1000 sor 80 kr. — A 1000 sor 80 kr. — III. emeleti 1-3 sor 60 kr. — A 1000 sor 80 kr. — Kisebbségi 30 kr. — A 1000 sor 80 kr.

Jegyek válthatók a népszínház belső (Károlyi-át felvétel) pénztárnál d. o. 10-1 óráig, d. u. 4-1/6 óráig, és a színházi jegyirodákban Koronaherceg-utca 8. és Andrássy-út 10. sz. n.

A nézőtér csak felvétel, kalap, bot és csizmák nélkül lehet beemelni. A ruhákban felvétel 10 kr. kalap, bot és csizmák 5 kr. fizetendő.

A megvett jegyek darabválasztás esetén is érvényesek, de azokat kívánatra az előadás kezdetéig a pénztár visszatéríti.

A buffet és osztrák az első emeleten van.

Holnap, vasárnap, 1898. évi december hó 11-én

Két előadás.

Délután 2¹/₂ órakor

bérleten kívül, mérsékelt helyárakkal:

Béla és a székely mint vendég:

Az édes.

Népszínház 3 felvétel, írt és zenejét szerzte S. Hevesi Sándor.

Este 7¹/₂ órakor

rendes helyárakkal:

másodszor:

Az unatkozó király.

Spanyol operetta 3 felvétel, írt és zenejét szerzte Chapi.

Es előadásra jegyek válthatók már ma d. o. 10-1-ig és d. u. 4-1/6 óráig, a jobboldali (népszínház-utca felvétel) pénztárnál, valamint a színházi jegyirodákban a szokásos elővételi díjak mellett.

Nagy Sándor könyvnyomtatás. Államrendelvény 73921. II. 1597. máj. 1898.

until December due to the immense success of a piece by József Bokor staged in the Folk Theatre.³² The Hungarian press identified that Spanish zarzuela had inspired French composers to write operettas, and in turn that the former had been influenced by French composers, thereby clarifying that the première of Chapi's zarzuela would match the preferences of the Budapest audiences.³³ In efforts to encourage the public to attend the zarzuela's première, some newspapers focussed on the participation of the famous operetta singer Aranka Hegyi in the leading role,³⁴ whose name had been linked to the Folk Theatre since 1880.³⁵ The press also touted the inclusion of a minuet and a *tarantella* to be performed by the theatre's ballet company, in a further effort to attract audiences.³⁶ The dress rehearsal took place on 10 December 1898. Unlike the *Nemzeti Színház* [National Theatre], the Folk Theatre did not open the rehearsal to the general public: only the Board of Directors, members of the Folk Theatre committee, and selected journalists could attend.³⁷

3. *Az unatkozó király* and the Budapest Première

Az unatkozó király premièred on 12 December 1898, generating ample press interest: seven significant musical reviews were published chronicling the success of the performance of the first zarzuela staged in Hungary. Some critics noted that zarzuela differed from operetta, explaining that the Spanish genre shared more similarities with Hungarian popular theatre, but rather than musical pieces inserted as independent numbers, zarzuela was entirely sung.³⁸ Others identified zarzuela solely with *género chico*: one-act zarzuela. This was true for the reviewer of *Magyar Újság*, who explained his reasons why *Az unatkozó király* was an operetta, not a zarzuela:

32. "Színház, művészet," *Budapesti Napló* 3/327 (27 November 1898), 9; "Irodalom, színház, művészet," *Magyar Újság* 7/329 (27 November 1898), 8.

33. "Színház, művészet," *Budapesti Napló* 3/330 (30 November 1898), 8; "Irodalom, színház, művészet," *Magyar Újság* 7/333 (1 December 1898), 6.

34. "Színház, művészet," *Budapesti Napló* 3/330 (3 December 1898), 8.

35. "Hegyi Aranka," in *Magyar színművészeti lexikon* [Lexicon of Hungarian theatrical art], ed. by Aladár SCHÖPFLIN, vol. 2 (Budapest: Országos Színészegyesület, 1929), 226–227.

36. "Színház, művészet," *Budapesti Napló* 3/334 (2 December 1898), 5.

37. "A Népszínház főpróbája. A Népszínházban holnap, pénteken délelőtt tíz órakor tartják meg Chapi spanyol operettjének, *Az unatkozó király*nak a főpróbáját. A főpróbára az igazgatóság a Népszínházi Bizottság tagjain kívül csakis a napilapok népszínházi kritikusait bízta meg. A Népszínház ugyanis, mint az igazgatóság hivatalos kommunikéje jelenti, a főpróbák tekintetében nem követi a Nemzeti Színház példáját s nem tart publikum előtt főpróbákat." "Színház, művészet," *Budapesti Napló* 3/339 (9 December 1898), 5.

38. "Az *unatkozó király*t spanyol operettnek mondja a színlap. A beavatottak tudják, hogy voltaképpen nem operette az, hanem *zarzuela*. Hogy mi a *zarzuela*? Spanyol népszínmű, mely szakasztott mása a mi népszínműünknek, csak hogy véges-végig énekelnek benne mindent, mint az operetteben, míg a magyar népszínműben az ének csak betétszám." "M., " "Művészet, tudomány, irodalom. *Az unatkozó király*. Première a Népszínházban," *Hazánk* 5/297 (11 December 1898), 7.

[...] such an operetta comes to us from Echegaray's homeland. Those of us in our country who know something about Spain – thank God they have already increased in number – say that this is not the real zarzuela, [it is] Spanish operetta. Zarzuela is just one farce of up to two acts, in which they sometimes sing. You cannot have multiple acts because each zarzuela is repeated three or four times in the theatre where it is performed. The Spanish operetta theatre plays continuously from two o'clock in the afternoon until midnight. And the whole program is just zarzuela, which has constantly renewing audiences.³⁹

Obviously, the reviewer of *Magyar Újság* neglected to acknowledge that three-act zarzuelas were also composed and performed in Spain during the late nineteenth century, despite the huge success of *género chico*. The *Magyar Újság* critic, as well as other contemporary Hungarian writers, noted the French influences in Chapí's work.

By contrast, some reviewers underlined the lack of operetta characteristics. The critic writing for the *Magyarország* appeared surprised that provocative dialogue and scenarios – a fundamental element of operetta – did not feature in Chapí's zarzuela.⁴⁰ The operetta features, however, further ensured that *Az unatkozó király* appealed to the audience. Operetta was a well established musical genre in Budapest, and most of the musical critics understood zarzuela as Spanish operetta. For this reason, many tried to identify Spanish characteristics. Some of them highlighted the universality of the characters and plot (written by Miguel Ramos Carrión and Vital Aza): a bored King desiring to travel anonymously throughout his kingdom to enjoy life freely; the King's travels, in shepherd dress, accompanied by his concerned ministers, who continually conceal realities from the King; a country in poverty, and citizens restless as a result of large tax impositions. In the course of touring the countryside, the King meets the beautiful Rose, and falls instantly in love. A sequence of comedic situations and misunderstandings ensues. Firstly, the King is conscripted along with his ministers; the King escapes from the army to unite with Rose; both disguise themselves as agricultural labourers during harvest and, finally, the fugitive King returns to the Palace, whereupon further comical situations await. The plot resolves happily with the sovereign's marriage to Rose.⁴¹

39. "Íme, ilyen operette kerül hozzánk Echegaray hazájából. Azok, akik ismerik nálunk a spanyol viszonyokat, — hál' Isten ezek száma is már szépen felszaporodott — mentségül azt hozzák fel, hogy ez nem a tulajdonképeni zarzuela, a spanyol operette. A zarzuela csak egy, legfeljebb kétfelvonásos bohózat, melyben némelykor énekelnek. Több felvonásos nem lehet, mert abban a színházban, hol előadják, megismétlik egyfolytában háromszor-négyszer is. A spanyol operette-színházban ugyanis délután két órától kezdve játszanak folytonosan éjfélig. S az egész program csak zarzuellából áll, melynek mindig új meg új közönsége akad." "Á. b.," "Az unatkozó király," *Magyar Újság* 7/343 (11 December 1898), 4.

40. "Hisz manapság már különlegességszámba megy egy olyan operett, amely ledér, pikáns dialogusok és helyzetek nélkül is mulattatni tud." "V. e.," "Irodalom, művészet," *Magyarország* 5/344 (11 December 1898), 11.

41. Miguel RAMOS CARRIÓN and Vital AZA, *El rey que rabió, zarzuela cómica en tres actos, dividida en ocho cuadros, en prosa y en verso, música de Ruperto Chapí* (Madrid: R. Velasco, 5/1892).

The critic writing for the *Budapest Napló* considered the manner in which the plot unfolds, involving abundant adventures and misunderstandings, as explicitly Spanish.⁴² The consensus amongst the Hungarian press was that the libretto was streamlined by comparison with European operettas,⁴³ which demonstrates Budapest audiences' familiarity with the European operetta repertoire. This simplicity and the universality of themes, together with the plot resulting from the transformation of *El rey que rabió* into *Az unatkozó király*, facilitated its exceptional and unexpected success.

Nevertheless, the plot contained thinly-veiled political criticism – devious, morally lacking political leaders – which was quickly understood by audiences through the libretto which ridiculed corrupt government. In no. 2 “Cuarteto-polka de la dimisión” [Polka-resignation quartet], the Minister of Defence, Superintendent, Governor and Admiral are fearful on account of the King's insistence that they either approve his incognito trip, or resign. The quartet, usually referred to as a “choir of resignation,” demonstrates how these politicians are determined to buy favour to conceal their corrupt endeavours in the rural kingdom from their sovereign. This ensemble and the no. 4 “Cuarteto de la risa” [Laughter quartet] were two of the most appreciated moments of the zarzuela.⁴⁴

The political commentary contributed to the huge success of *Az unatkozó király*, despite the fact that some reviewers did not agree with the musical allusions to contemporary Hungarian political contexts.⁴⁵ Aranka Hegyi's performance in the role of the King also generated the audience's enthusiastic response. The Hungarian press commented on her dual abilities as both ballerina and singer, and her resulting effective performance in Chapí's zarzuela. She was already considered a symbol of French operetta. Gabi Bárdi (Rose, the peasant in love with the King) and Németh (the Minister of Defence) were also well received.⁴⁶

With regard to the music, the Hungarian press distinguished the rhythms and some particular musical motifs as typically Spanish, demonstrated most clearly in relation to no. 3 “Idilio pastoral” [Pastoral idyll]⁴⁷ and no. 10 “Mazurka de las segadoras” [Farm labourer mazurka]. The *Budapesti Napló* critic viewed these

42. “M. -s.,” “Az unatkozó király,” *Budapesti Napló* 3/341 (11 December 1898), 10–11.

43. See, for example, “Theater, Kunst und Literatur. Volkstheater,” *Pester Lloyd* 45/298 (11 December 1898), 7.

44. “M. -s.,” “Az unatkozó király,” *Budapesti Napló* 3/341 (11 December 1898), 10–11; “M.,” “Művészet, tudomány, irodalom. *Az unatkozó király*. Première a Népszínházban,” *Hazánk* 5/297 (11 December 1898), 7.

45. “Hogy a szereplők a kínáló alkalmat nem mulasztják el s aktuális megjegyzéseket rögtönöznek, az természetes. Ezért nem találjuk túlságos izlésesnek, hogy az operettet épp most adják elő. Várhattak volna vele; s ha elő sem adják, az sem lett volna baj. Ezek a rögtönzések ugyan még a kisebbik baj. Öreg hiba azonban, hogy ebben az operetben nemcsak a király unatkozik, hanem – a közönség is.” “Á. b.,” “*Az unatkozó király*,” *Magyar Újság* 7/343 (11 December 1898), 4.

46. “M.,” “Művészet, tudomány, irodalom. *Az unatkozó király*. Première a Népszínházban,” *Hazánk* 5/297 (11 December 1898), 7; “Á. b.,” “*Az unatkozó király*,” *Magyar Újság* 7/343 (11 December 1898), 4; “Theater, Kunst und Literatur. Volkstheater,” *Pester Lloyd* 45/298 (11 December 1898), 7.

47. “V. e.,” “Irodalom, művészet,” *Magyarország* 5/344 (11 December 1898), 11.

PLATE 5 Minister of Defence couplet by Izsó Barna

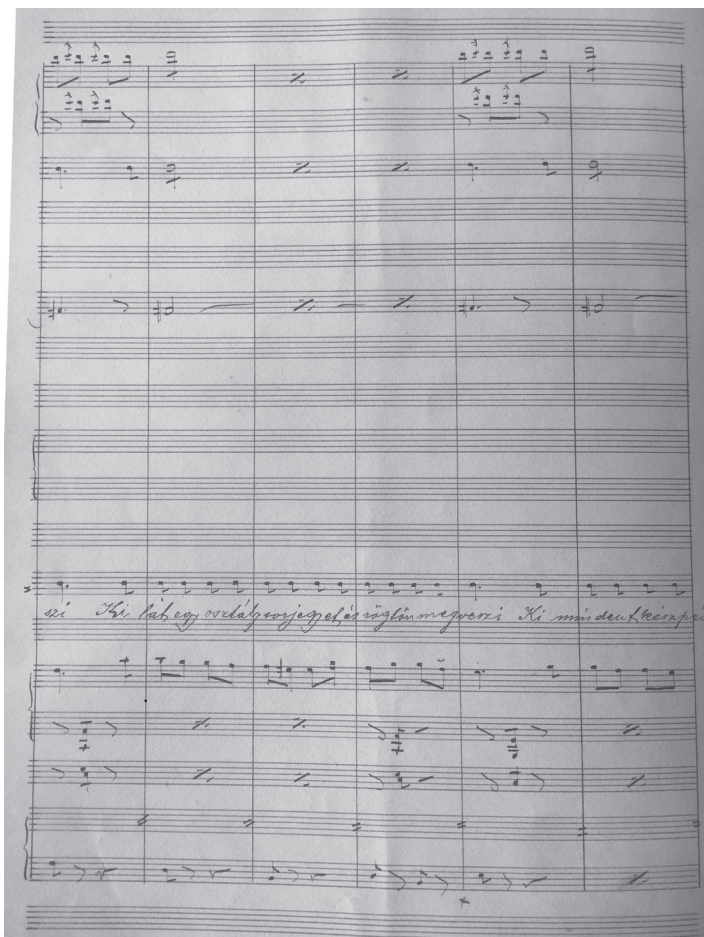
Couplet *Izsó Barna*

numbers as integral to the work's classification as a specifically Spanish operetta. The King and Rose's duet (no. 9, following Rose's arietta) was a further highlight according to critics,⁴⁸ although journals demonstrate inconsistency regarding which numbers received the most applause. The *Országos Hírlap*, for example, recounted that a danced piece by Aranka Hegyi and supporting actors entitled "Szent vagy őrült" [Saint or crazy], was also warmly received.⁴⁹ Both were insertions written by Izsó Barna (1859–1944), who was not only the conductor of the Folk Theatre leading the local première of Chapí's piece, but also a prolific and

48. "M.," "Művészet, tudomány, irodalom. Az unatkozó király. Première a Népszínházban," *Hazánk* 5/297 (11 December 1898), 7.

49. "M. g.," "Az unatkozó király," *Országos Hírlap* 2/341 (11 December 1898), 10.

PLATE 5 (Continuation)



popular composer of Hungarian operetta.⁵⁰ The first piece, a *Ballet* inserted into act 2 at the end of no. 7 entitled *A korhely király*, included a *fandango* and a *jota*. The insertion, a short *jota* couplet, was sung by Németh (Minister of Defence), and introduced castanet accompaniment: a novelty for the audience.⁵¹ According to the Folk Theatre's extant full performing score, this song was inserted between nos. 9 and 10, and accompanied by stage dance.⁵² An additional ballet was also

50. "Barna Izsó," in *Magyar színművészeti lexikon*, ed. by Aladár SCHÖPFLIN, vol. 1 (Budapest: Országos Színészegyesület, 1929), 127–128.

51. "Theater, Kunst und Literatur. Volkstheater," *Pester Lloyd* 45/298 (11 December 1898), 7.

52. H-Bn, shelf mark: Népsz. 768/I, 294.

PLATE 6 *Keringő* by Izsó Barna

34. *Keringő*

The musical score is handwritten on a single page, numbered 34 in the top left corner. The title "Keringő" is written in a cursive script at the top center. The score is organized into two main sections. The upper section contains staves for woodwinds (Flauti, Oboe, Clarineti, Fagott), brass (Corni, Trombi), and percussion (Tamb. picc., Cimb., Org. Cassa). The lower section contains staves for vocal parts (Király, Női) and strings (Violini, Celli, Bassi). The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, and note values. The paper shows signs of age, with some discoloration and wear.

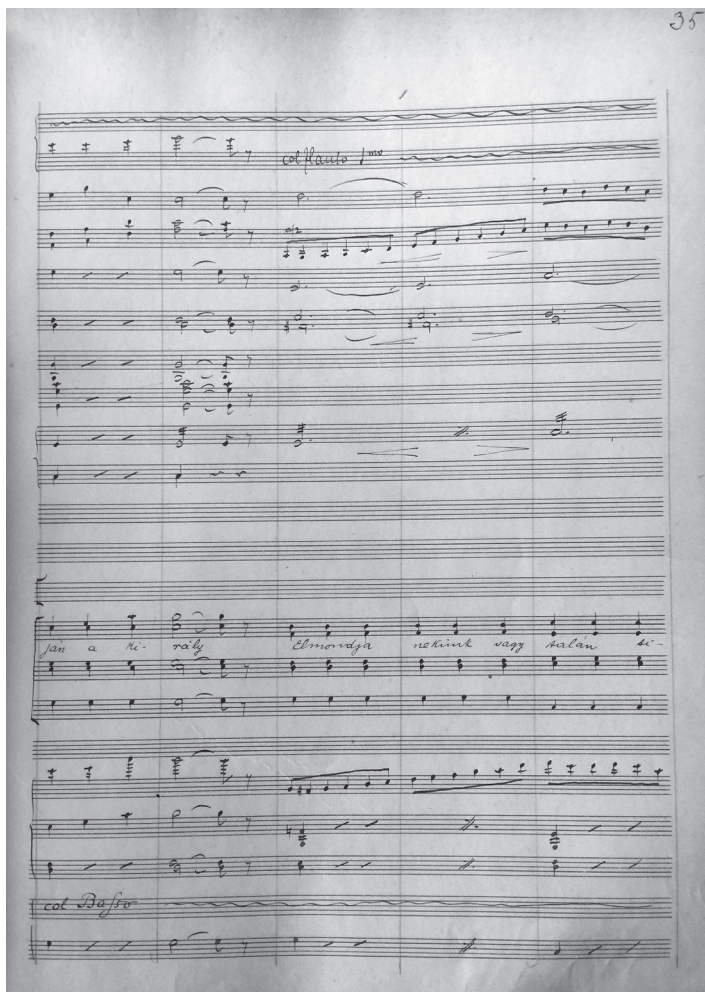
inserted at the end of no. 8 – at least, according to the inscription “betét induló” (interpolated march) – though the score of this insertion is lost.⁵³

Barna also undertook a reorchestration which adapted Chapí’s zarzuela whilst retaining the Spanish colour: a musical negotiation noted by the Hungarian press.⁵⁴ The reviewer for the *Országos Hírlap* explained that the orchestration was based

53. Ibid., 267.

54. “Az operett zenéjéről csak elismerőleg nyilatkozhatunk, de tekintve, hogy azt nagyrészt Barna Izsó, a Népszínház derék karmestere hangszerelte, lehetne spanyolabb is. A zene bővelkedik szép részletekben; ilyenek: a király belépője, a pásztordal, a második felvonásban Róza és a király kettőse, az arató dal, a Mert én a király vagyok kezdetű keringő. Tiszta spanyol motívumokat az operettben előforduló csinos balletszámokban hallottunk.” “V. e.” “Irodalom, művészet,” *Magyarország* 5/344 (11 December 1898), 11.

PLATE 6 (Continuation)

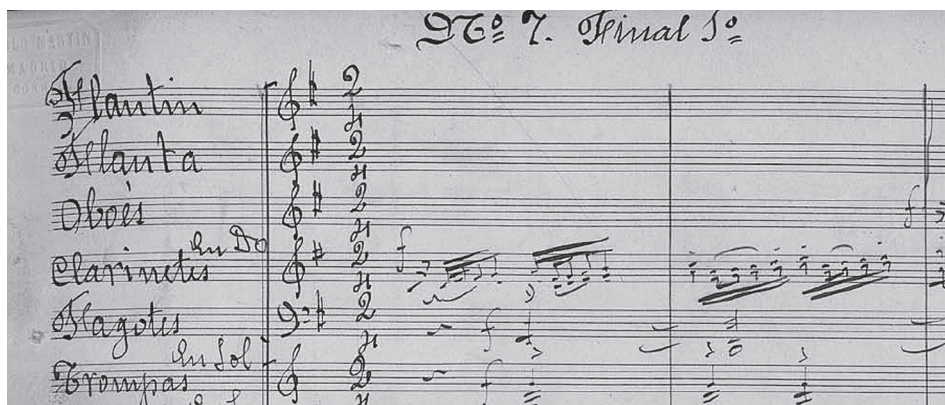
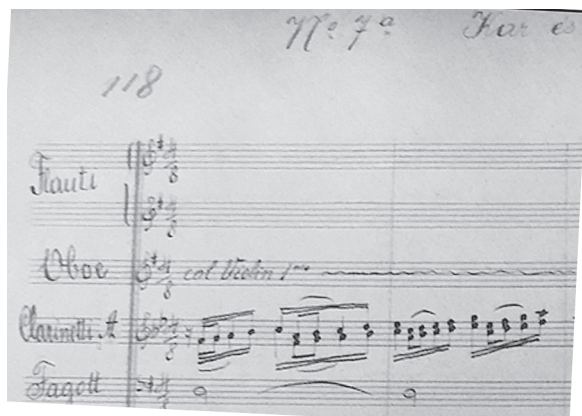


on a piano vocal score and accordingly, he asserted, Chapí's music had not previously been heard in Budapest.⁵⁵ This was frequent practice in nineteenth-century operetta performance; possibly to avoid copyright issues. A comparison of Chapí's handwritten autograph of *El rey que rabio* and its Hungarian adaptation reveals

55. "Chapi személyesen, úgy látszik, igen győnge zenész. Képességeit nem látjuk egészen tisztán. Az ő művéből csak egy zongorakivonat került Budapestre és e kivonattól hangszerelte meg a darabot Barna Izsó. A zenész emberre nézve tehát *Az unatkozó király* budapesti bemutatója egyértékű azzal, mintha Chapitól nem hallott volna egyetlen egy ütemet sem [...] Egy operette, amelyet a szerző zongorakivonatából csinált egy idegen kéz, minket épp oly kevésbé érdekel, mint az a Makart-kép, amelyet Makart rajzolt, de nem festett. És önök mit szeretnek jobban: a pástétom receptjét-e vagy a pástétomot? Mi Chapinak egy receptjét kaptuk, a főztjét nem." "M. g.," "Az unatkozó király," *Országos Hírlap* 2/341 (11 December 1898), 10.

PLATE 7A-B *El rey que rabió*, excerpt from no. 7

a) in the original; b) in Barna's version



that Barna faithfully followed the original version, undertaking only minor adjustments to achieve a more “Hungarian” sound. Barna deleted instruments which could add an intense and sharp sonority. For example, he omitted piccolo flute, drum and triangle several times (such as in the Prelude and in no. 6), and even deleted the wind band when this ensemble reinforces the orchestra, as in no. 2. Evidently, these instrumental alterations entailed readjustments to the orchestration; accordingly, some motifs were inserted into the orchestral parts. Similarly, in no. 8, the brass band situated in the wings was removed. In Spain, military music and civic music were closely aligned throughout the nineteenth century: most Spanish composers and performers were members of the military, or had been enlisted during their youth. In this number, therefore, the brass band contributed not only to symbolise a Spanish *reveille*, but also added a flavour of Spanish military life in

the barracks parallel to the developing plot, which here approaches the King and his Minister of Defence's conscription.⁵⁶ Removing the brass ensemble implied further alterations; for example, the inclusion of bassoons in this military music results in a different effect from the Spanish soundscape of Chapi's zarzuela.

The Hungarian press also highlighted the opening minuet, composed by Barna, on account of the Folk Theatre's ballet troupe's extravagant Spanish costumes.⁵⁷ The minuet in question is in actuality a *Keringő* [Waltz] sung by the King and the Minister of Defence, which was inserted into no. 1. Probably composed by Barna, this *Keringő* replaced the original King's *coplas* [couplets] with a choir. Curiously, the Spanish song *La partida* [The departure] by Fermín María Álvarez was inserted after the *Keringő*, and before the end of the original minuet in the first number the first song. This song, adapted for violin and piano, had previously been performed in 1894 in Budapest.⁵⁸ *La partida*, dedicated to the well-known tenor Emile Nandin,⁵⁹ had travelled across Europe.⁶⁰ Accordingly it is unsurprising that it had been inserted into the zarzuela's Budapest score. The lyrics addressed the theme of bidding farewell to a homeland, and was therefore a fitting accompaniment for the King's departure as he embarks upon his journey through the countryside. The opening number concluded with a new finale, in which Barna encompassed themes from the *Keringő* and deleted the original *pasodoble*, perhaps to achieve a more Austro-Hungarian ending.

Barna also altered the time measure in the no. 7 "Baile y escena final del acto I" [Dancing and final scene in Act I] from 2/4 to 4/8, to facilitate the easier performance of a common Spanish dancing rhythm (see *Plates 7a–7b*). It is possible that the same incentive informed the elimination of nos. 15 and 16, two of the most characteristic numbers in the zarzuela tradition: ironic, comedic choral numbers, replaced by a *mazurka* and a "Dal," a Hungarian song, for the King. Subsequently, Barna returned to no. 18 in the original version (in the Budapest version, this is no. 17). As these pieces are not significant to the theatrical action, the plot remains undisturbed by this interruption. On account of references to the removed nos. 15 and 16, nos. 18 and 19 also suffered cuts.

Considering Barna's musical insertions, some critics understood Spanish operetta as comprised of a combination of independent numbers, instead of a continuous, unabridged piece, with strong relationships between its numbers.⁶¹ This latter

56. H-Bn, shelf mark: Népsz. 768/I, 22.

57. "M. -s.," "Az unatkozó király," *Budapesti Napló* 3/341 (11 December 1898), 10–11.

58. "N. N.," "Művészetek," *Fővárosi Lapok* 31/322 (21 November 1894), 2772.

59. Fermín MARÍA ÁLVAREZ, *La Partida* (Bilbao: Dotesio, 1900).

60. Celsa Alonso wrote that *La Partida* was translated into Italian by A. Soffredini and was published by Ricordi. See Celsa ALONSO, *La canción lírica española en el siglo XI* (Madrid: ICCMU, 1998), 426.

61. "Daß die kontinentalen Compositeure auch für die Operette nicht mehr lose Piecen, sondern vollständige Szenenmusik schreiben, davon scheint man allerdings jenseits der Pyrenäen noch nichts zu wissen." "Theater, Kunst und Literatur. Volkstheater," *Pester Lloyd* 45/298 (11 December 1898), 7.

characteristic, as well as the simplicity of the libretto, conveyed a deceptive impression of Spanish zarzuela, which was largely associated with operetta development in Budapest. *Az unatkozó király* betrays French influence from Offenbach's works, but also encompassed some elements borrowed from Viennese operetta, evident in the insertion of *polkas*, *waltzes* and *minuets*. From the omission of some specifically "Spanish" numbers, and considering that several pieces (such as ballet, *polka*, *waltz* and *mazurka*) were inserted into Chapí's original version, it appears that the musical components evocative of Viennese operetta were introduced by Barna.⁶² Barna further adapted Chapí's zarzuela to contemporary Hungarian lyric taste, akin to the translators' libretto modifications which replaced Spanish expressions with Hungarian equivalents. One example is found in act 2, scene 7, when the King and his Minister of Defence, disguised as shepherds, sought out dinner in a tavern. The marinated tuna, a typical Spanish meal, was substituted with a pork leg.⁶³

4. Epilogue

The Budapest Folk Theatre staged *Az unatkozó király* thirteen times; the final performance took place on 21 February 1899.⁶⁴ The second performance was sold out, owing partially to the première's remarkable success, together with Rózsavölgyi's publication of the zarzuela's popular numbers at the end of December 1898.⁶⁵ This immense success is also demonstrated by illustrations published in journals such as *Bolond Istók* (see Plate 8), displaying the King, Rose and the three duplicitous Ministers. This drawing alludes to the zarzuela's finale, in which the King expresses his resolve to marry Rose. She symbolizes the constitution (*alkotmány*) on which the ministers should swear. Although initially failing to apprehend his Ministers' shortcomings, by the zarzuela's close the King appreciates the necessity of upright leadership. This illustration thereby encapsulated the zarzuela's libretto, and also the moral code that should underlie government.

62. Ibid.

63. See the extant stage manual of the Budapest performances: H-Bn, shelf mark: MM 5722.

64. A. Károlyné BERCZELI, *A Népszínház műsora (Adattár)* (Budapest: Színháztudományi és Filmtudományi Intézet / Országos Színháztörténeti Múzeum, 1958), 44.

65. "Irodalom, művészet," *Magyarország* 5/362 (30 December 1898), 10.

PLATE 8 Drawing of *Az unatkozó király*⁶⁶

From January 1899 to April 1900, *Az unatkozó király* was staged widely in the provincial Hungarian theatres, performed in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg,⁶⁷ Kecskemét,⁶⁸ Pápa,⁶⁹ Pécs,⁷⁰ as well as in Transylvania (today part of Romania): Temesvár (in Romanian: Timișoara),⁷¹ Szatmár⁷² and Szatmárnémeti⁷³ (Satu

66. "Bolond Istók a színházban," *Bolond Istók* 21/51 (18 December 1898), 7.

67. "N. N.," "Színház," *Szatmár és Vidéke* 16/4 (24 January 1899), 5.

68. *Kecskeméti Lapok* 32/6 (5 February 1899), 3; "Színházi heti-műsor," *Kecskeméti Lapok* 32/7 (12 February 1899), 5; "Hírek. Előleges színházi jelentés," *Nagy-Károly és Vidéke* 16/32 (10 August 1899), 4.

69. "Színészet Pápán," *Pápai Közlöny* 9/23 (4 June 1899), 3; "Színház," *Pápai Újság* 1/37 (10 September 1899), 3.

70. "Művészet, irodalom," *Pécsi Figyelő* 27/246 (27 October 1899), 6; "Ei.," "Színház és művészet. *Az unatkozó király*," *Pécsi Napló* 8/247 (28 October 1899), 4; "H—I; E—r.," "Művészet, irodalom," *Pécsi Figyelő* 27/248 (29 October 1899), 3.

71. *Budapesti Napló* 5/27 (28 January 1900), 10.

72. "Hírek," *Szatmár* 25/2 (14 January 1899), 2; "A szerencsés szám," *Szatmár-Németi* 3/4 (24 January 1899), 2; "Előleges színházi jelentés," *Szatmármegyei Közlöny* 25/33 (13 August 1899), 4; *Szatmármegyei Közlöny* 25/39 (24 September 1899), 8; "Előleges színházi jelentés," *Szatmármegyei Közlöny* 25/39 (28 September 1899), 4.

73. "Színház," *Heti Szemle* 8/4 (25 January 1899), 6; "Színház," *Heti Szemle* 8/8 (22 December 1899), 6.

Mare), Felsőbánya (Baia Sprie)⁷⁴ and Nagybánya (Baia Mare).⁷⁵ Furthermore, *Az unatkozó király* stimulated the Hungarian press to compare the work's themes to their own political context, evident since the 1898 Hungarian premiere,⁷⁶ and throughout the early decades of the twentieth century.⁷⁷ Chapí's zarzuela continued to be performed both privately and publically, on account of its accessibility through published excerpts for voice and piano.⁷⁸ A version for military band was performed as late as 1931, in excess of three decades since the zarzuela's arrival in Budapest.⁷⁹

74. "Szinházi jelentés," *Nagybánya és Vidéke* 25/13 (26 March 1899), 3.

75. "Szinészet," *Nagybánya és Vidéke* 26/14 (8 April 1899), 2; "Szinészet," *Nagybánya és Vidéke* 25/16 (16 April 1899), 3; "Szinészet Felsőbányán," *Nagybánya és Vidéke* 26/13 (1 April 1900), 2; "Szinészet," *Nagy-Károly és Vidéke* 26/14 (8 April 1900), 2.

76. "Apró hírek," *Borsszem Jankó* 31/51 (18 December 1898), 5.

77. "Ásítózó hatalmasok," *Ország-Világ* 56/28 (5 October 1935), 8.

78. "Vidám dalok gyűjteménye," *Corvina* 31/8 (20 March 1908), 45.

79. *Budapesti Hírlap* 51/130 (12 June 1931), 3.