

Musicology, Nationalism and Social Activism in Interwar Spain. José Subirá: an Intellectual Biography

Despite the belief in the autonomy of music, very interesting ideological constructions were operated around music in interwar Spain, especially between the Second Republic (1931-1939) and the early Franco regime (1939-1947). This PhD aims to analyse the conceptual axes and historical context which led to the emergence of musicology as an autonomous discipline in Spain through the reconstruction of José Subirá's intellectual biography. The main contribution of this scholar was researching unknown music sources of the eighteenth century and challenging the widespread assumption that history of Spanish music was the story of sacred expression. As a result of his work for the international exchange of ideas in different institutions, he cultivated a vast network of contacts abroad and he promoted the involvement of Spanish musicology on the international stage.

My dissertation deals with the intellectual transfers between countries in the professionalization of musicology, the influence of musical studies on the essentialist construction of 'the nation' and the ideological implications of the musical canon in historical discourses. I illustrate that the birth of musicology had strong nationalistic connotations and why it played a major role in the mass politics of the 30s. The absence of critical studies devoted to Subirá, who was an engaged socialist during the Second Republic and then collaborated with the fascist government, highlights the identity problems and interpretative inertias of musicology in Spain since the Democratic Transition.