

Spain's Francoist Broadway: American musicals in Madrid, 1955-1975

Ramón ESPEJO

Author:

Ramón Espejo
Universidad de Sevilla, Spain
respejo@us.es
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4239-244X>

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Abstract:

This article traces the itinerary followed by the earliest Broadway musicals to be imported to Madrid in the 1950s and 1960s. Such innovative format dazzled critics and audiences, carving out a niche of enthusiastic followers that would grow larger over time. The handful of works borrowed in this period will receive attention, especially insofar as their reception is concerned. The final phase of the Francoist dictatorship brought an increased visibility to the form, as heated controversy surrounded the eventual importation and prohibition of titles such as *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. In the case of the former, shows purporting to bring to Spaniards what the authorities had banned will be briefly discussed. The latter will receive closer attention. Both these plays will serve as privileged viewing platforms whence the tensions inherent to a moribund regime and its outdated cultural policies will become obvious.

Keywords: American Musicals; US Drama and Theatre in Spain; *Hair*; *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

It is by now commonplace to refer to Madrid's Gran Vía as Spain's Broadway on account of the variety and success of the city's musical theatre offerings, most of them borrowed from the US. Such notion, however, takes for granted that Broadway only purveys musicals. While not exactly true, this last may well be the view of many a tourist who, in visiting New York, can feel the experience of the "Big Apple" is not complete until setting foot on one of its fabled theatres. Therein, musicals are a lingua franca that enable people not fluent in English to still take in a show while visiting the city. Faced with the choice of a Sam Shepard --and revivals of plays from the past can still be found on Broadway-- and *Phantom of the Opera*, a tourist will realize right away that for the latter to be enjoyed one does not need to possess either fluency in English or an understanding of American culture.

While it is true that Madrid has managed to fashion itself over the last twenty years as the third capital of the Broadway musical in the world, after New York and London, it is no less so that a look at the Gran Vía's marquees before the 2020 pandemic forced theatres to close would have revealed the crass commercialism of blockbusters such as *Anastasia* and *The Lion King*. Yet, this paper takes us back to a time when musicals were far more oppositional and vexed. Thus, it will briefly survey the musical scene in Madrid insofar as Broadway musicals were concerned throughout the late 1950s and 1960s. By doing this, we will refute widely-held views of the American musical not making it to Spain until the 1970s. Marta Mateo indeed claims that the first American musical to be mounted in Spain was *Jesus Christ Superstar* (2008, 321-322). But looking at earlier examples will reveal audiences and critics surprised before an innovative format that both pleased and confounded, the latter owing to its hybridity and aesthetic daring. As the 1970s brought to Spain instability and gave rise to political opposition, musical borrowings became more daring. Indeed, as Franco was about to die, heated controversy surrounded the non-premiere of *Hair*, as well as the belated opening of *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Whether to generate artistic discomfort or to spawn political subversion, there was indeed a time when Madrid was Spain's Broadway, but this had far less timid connotations than it would subsequently take on.

According to the OED, "to borrow" may be used in at least two different, however related, ways. In general parlance, borrowing is to assume the temporary use of something with the tacit or avowed promise of eventually returning it to its rightful owner. Among the figurative uses contemplated by the OED, "borrowing" refers to a language's adoption of a word or expression from another language. One may add that the latter borrowings tend to be incorporated as a way to make up for the lack of proper resources to express an idea or concept in the target language. Obviously, the borrowed word will never be "returned". Expanding on this kind of imagery for the case of musicals,

one can easily see that present-day borrowings of musical plays seem to fit the first kind of borrowing, often in surprisingly literal ways. Franchises –the way musicals reach us nowadays—constitute a way of obtaining temporary rights for the staging of a musical work. After the contract expires, borrowers lose any right to continue to use the source and are obliged to “return” it. Rebellato refers to such transactions as conducive to “MacTheatre”, as, in a way that reminds us of the way a well-known chain of fast-food restaurants operates: every single aspect of the original creation needs to be replicated: “sets, costumes, direction, lighting, the poster, and all the merchandise” and every movement, line, or dance number must exactly adjust to the specifications, with actors and directors feeling part of an “assembly line” rather than of an artistic venture (2009, 41-44). As long as the borrowing is enjoyed, the promise exists that the material will be taken care of and never significantly altered.

Conversely, the musicals that I will be discussing henceforth might be seen to belong to the second kind of borrowing. They were “borrowed” (with no franchise agreements being signed) to fill a gap that no other work could possibly fill. What such a gap might be may be debated, but Mateo insightfully argues that there seemed to exist a need for musical plays “which could appeal to the general public [as opposed to the cultural elites], could provide light entertainment and emotional experience while laying claim to a certain artistic quality, and could touch upon topics and present stories that were not associated with traditional Spanish life” (2008, 332). This last fact speaks to the need for cosmopolitanism and universalism in the sphere of musical theatre, ones never cultivated by indigenous forms such as *zarzuelas* or *revistas*. Early musicals were thus like linguistic borrowings, filling existing gaps in Spain’s theatrescape. Moreover, shows like the *Jesucristo Superstar* performed in the 1970s remain much more Spanish creations than American ones. The American plays provided the blueprints, to be sure, but then major artistic decisions were made by the Spanish teams, who felt a degree of freedom in adapting the material that later generations of musical theatre practitioners could not even dream of. Audiences were further interested in what the Spanish company offered them, not on how faithfully the American play had been represented, as opposed to today’s musicals, advertised as faithful reproductions of their Broadway templates, a fact that seems to enhance their appeal. There was much more creativity in early borrowings than in later ones: as they were not to be “returned”, they were subject to appropriation, and this may well have contributed additional meanings, while also playing down or completely obliterating others.¹

1 Similar phenomena of intercultural exchange are common in the history of theatre. Dan Rebellato identifies Artaud’s encounter with Balinese theatre as the first true case of

One of the first Broadway hits to reach Spain after the Civil War was Joseph Kesselring's *Arsenic and Old Lace*, which debuted as *Arsénico y encaje antiguo* at Barcelona's Teatro Barcelona in July 1945 (and in October of the same year at the Infanta Isabel in Madrid). A beloved piece from the 1940s, Elaine explains to his fiancé, Mortimer, a theatre critic: "Musicals somehow have a humanizing effect on you [...] After a serious play we join the proletariat in the subway and I listen to that lecture on the drama. After a musical you bring me home in a taxi and you make a few passes" (1954, 784). It is impossible to know how screenwriter and critic (as well as occasional translator) Luis Fernando de Igoa's unpublished version rendered this line, but what seems certain is that Spanish audiences must have missed the funny remark on the breezy nature of musicals. It was not until exactly one decade later, in 1955, when they were finally offered a specimen of a form that had transcended its original musical comedy milieu, and, especially after *Oklahoma!*, attained an organic character and artistic seriousness that it would retain for long (at least until corporate musicals came along, franchises became widespread, and those with artistic ambitions within the field of musical theatre had to find more sympathetic venues Off and Off-Off Broadway, as well as in regional theatre).

The 1949 *South Pacific*, which ran on Broadway for almost 2,000 performances, was based on WW2 veteran James A. Michener's Pulitzer-prize-winning 1947 *Tales of the South Pacific*. Starting with *Show Boat*, the American musical had soon understood the benefits of borrowing from literary works; skirting the looseness characterizing earlier musical comedy, the source guaranteed fleshed-out characters, a plot, and unity. Referred to as book musical precisely on this account, the form, always reveling in its transtextual drive, has since looked elsewhere for inspiration: a movie, another play, the career of a pop band, or even a painting (Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George*). More recent musicals do without a consistent referent, but there always tends to be a distant echo of another work (*Rent* and Puccini's *La Bohème*, for instance).

Still a soppy musical, where love happens at once and is accorded the greatest relevance, according to Andrea Most, *South Pacific* nevertheless "marks a moment when the musical theatre was striving to distance itself from its commercial roots and to redefine itself instead as art" (2000, 310). Richard Rodgers, Joshua Logan and Oscar Hammerstein II, deploying various incidents and characters from Michener's book, also comment on prejudice, and obliquely on gender through Luther Billis, the sailor who weaves, sews and makes dresses

transcultural fertilization (2009, 3), but there are countless ones preceding it, such as Shakespeare's bowdlerized versions in the America of the 19th century, or the Roman adaptation (or often undisguised plagiarism) of Greek works.

for women.² The surprisingly serious hit “You’ve Got to Be Taught” writes off the idea that prejudices are natural and insurmountable. They are posited as carefully instilled in people by larger structures seeking to preserve their ascendancy. And if they are learnt, in theory they can be “unlearnt” too. Contemporary critics have doubted the musical’s commitment to the battle against prejudice is sincere or consistent.³ Others have not: writer and preeminent theatre critic Marcos Ordóñez opined the piece blended commercialism with a liberal viewpoint quite successfully (2003, 377).

In January 1955, audiences were offered the Spanish *Al sur del Pacífico*, directed by the shrewd José Tamayo, whose Lope de Vega company had for years imported the most provocative plays from America, notable among them Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* in 1952. Tamayo is a major figure of mid-20th century Spanish theatre, and especially of note because of his countless productions based on American plays. Unsure whether this was proper theatre or something else, Tamayo secured the Teatro de la Zarzuela, better equipped for musical performances than other Madrid venues, somewhat misleading audiences as to the exact nature of the piece, and obscuring its theatrical character. One hundred performances did not amount to an astounding run, but producers could hardly complain of the turnout, especially given how novel the format was.

Writer and scholar Juan Ignacio Ferreras, then writing for the prestigious, slightly oppositional *Teatro*, was confused as to which label best described the play, intimating it was mapping out new territory; in his opinion, Spanish composers and lyricists would do well in paying attention (1955, 55). Marquerié and Fernández-Cid, in a joint review for *ABC*,⁴ noted the organic character of the various elements (especially the songs), and praised the result

2 Whether they did not know how to do so or just did not want to take this story any further remains unknown. The fact that he could be gay is quickly dispelled, although at least the monolithic concept of masculinity emerging after the War is obliquely questioned. Conversely, through nurse Nellie Forbush, the play seems to posit that the role of women after the war should be away from the workplace and, again, as mothers and wives (which Nellie will be after marrying Emile).

3 Rick Ayers reviewed a recent revival for *The Huffington Post*, and characteristically pronounced it “a textbook example of Orientalism” (2011, online). Following Edward Said, this amounts to the creation of an East representing the exotic and sensual that is missing in the West, which must be duly appropriated by a discourse that, in *South Pacific*, leaves Liat with scarcely a word to be said and content to play “the perfect female, passive, receptive [...] intuitive, irrational and in need of domination” (Ayers 2011, online).

4 Ferreras was the paper’s music critic, while Marquerié was the theatre one. The fact that they joined forces to review this specific show is further proof of the confusion before the work’s hybrid form: not knowing what it was exactly, the paper opted for the easiest solution and commissioned a joint review.

as of rare quality (1955, 37). Others saw the piece as a perfect illustration of the dynamism of American theatrical culture, always moving with the times and exploring the uncharted (Patterson 2010, 60). The latter was intended both as praise for American writers and negative reflection on the shameful state of Spanish musical theatre at the time. The versatility of performers who could seamlessly move between acting and singing was specifically lauded (Fernández Montesinos 2008, 81-82).

A quick look at the state of native musical theatre seems called for at this point, if only to understand the recurrent comments by reviewers alerting composers and lyricists that they needed to move ahead, as their Broadway colleagues seemed to be doing, judging by these borrowings. The most successful of Spanish musical formats had been *zarzuelas*, a native form blending operetta and indigenous tunes and rhythms. With a long tradition behind them, the Civil War would bring such tradition to an end. As composers turned to other genres, the form has merely survived by means of revivals, new work remaining extremely rare and mostly marginal.⁵ Between the 1950s and 1980s, one can say that Spanish musical theatre consisted entirely –at least as new shows were concerned—of *revistas*, shows often revolving around a star (Celia Gámez most prominently in the 1950s) and smacking of the revues and vaudeville shows common on Broadway in the early 20th century. They catered to a popular audience with few artistic expectations, as success depended on the craft of the stars and the charm of the tunes being sung, as well as the lavish costumes, sets and fanciful choreographies.⁶ The Broadway musical brought less spectacle (especially true of the concrete shows making their way to Spain) but more topicality in the subject matter, as well as a more organic conception of the material. In most of the reviews of Broadway musicals throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the template against which reviewers compared what they saw would be these *revistas*, and some of their opinions fail to make sense if one does not bear them in mind.

While the first iteration of the Broadway musical in Francoist Spain left a good impression among critics and audiences, there seemed to be no hurry

5 The fact that performances of *zarzuela* are often subsidized point to their being perceived as part of Spanish theatrical heritage, one to be preserved just like arrowheads from ancient civilizations are treasured at museums. See Marco 1987; and Martí i Pérez 1995 for discussion of this phenomenon.

6 See Araque Pérez 2009, who surveys Spanish *revistas* between 1925 and 1962. He comes to the rather unwarranted conclusion that these shows were more substantial than they are given credit for, but he never presents a convincing argument other than his undisguised admiration for the format. Araque Pérez is also a producer and director, and has recently made some attempts to revive the genre.

to enlarge exposure to the form. While this came about, in 1960, Antonio Fernández-Cid published a feature on the Broadway musical in *Primer acto*, noting its ascendancy was due to the fact that stars were never chosen because of their charisma but based on their ability to contribute to the overall effort (1960, 20-21), somehow signaling that subsequent borrowings should try to place professionalism above stardom (and, as noted in the paragraph above, tacitly complaining that Spanish equivalents relied too heavily on their stars). Shortly thereafter, his opinions were heeded when the 1959 *Redhead*, book and lyrics by Dorothy and Herbert Fields, Sidney Sheldon and David Shaw, music by Albert Hague, opened in October 1961 at the Teatro de la Zarzuela as *La pelirroja*. Directed by René Anselmo and Luis de Llano, the foreign cast included the largely unknown Armando Calvo and Virma González.

Best-known as the first musical collaboration between Bob Fosse and Gwen Verdon (both getting married a year after its debut), the piece is by now all but forgotten. Yet, it enjoyed a substantial run of over 450 performances in 1959. Reminiscent of Fosse's subsequent *Chicago* in its exploration of the popularity craze in Victorian London, it displays a convoluted and ultimately negligible murder plot. Reviewers both in New York and Madrid found little to commend, but agreed the two productions, the American and the Spanish one, were accomplished and competent (Campo 1961, 10; Marquerie 1961, 109).

Three years later, in 1964, two more musicals debuted in Spain, marking an increased acceleration in the rhythm of importations of such plays. *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* premiered at the Alvin Theatre on Broadway in May 1962, for a run of nearly 1,000 performances, produced by Harold Prince. The book was by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart, music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, whose first show this was, although he had already written lyrics for both *West Side Story* and *Gypsy*. Zero Mostel assumed the lead role both on Broadway and in the 1966 movie version, and his work was crucial for the play's success. The musical is inspired by characters and episodes variously lifted from Plautus, who was, according to Gelbart, the fountainhead of modern comedy and the first to marshal humor in service of a plot; he moreover created comic types and situations still used today, with slight permutations. Plautus invented the very language of comedy (misunderstandings, double meanings, puns), and made it clear the genre was meant to poke fun at human foibles (Gelbart 2008, x).

A Funny Thing relies on a clever servant to provide much of the humor: Pseudolus. He promises his master to get him the woman he loves in exchange for his freedom and is determined to go to the wildest extremes to attain it. Such extremes are indeed unsurpassed in their wildness. According to Kislán, and given the frantic rhythm, "Sondheim wrote songs as moments of welcome

relief” (1995, 157). The Broadway staging was recognized as brilliant, and praise went mostly to the performers. According to John McClain, “the complications leading to this denouement are often plain silly, but the charade has the merit of never taking itself seriously for a second” (1962, n/a). Whitney Bolton welcomed the breeziness, one with “[n]o messages, no themes, no aims but to make you double up with helpless laughter” (1962, n/a). Behind such apparently trivial intent lies a deconstructive spirit that seeks to probe the depths of the comedic form and is rather postmodern in its play with old forms and conventions.

Golfus de Roma was the imaginative title given to the Spanish version. It opened at the Teatro Maravillas in Madrid in March 1964, an important milestone as being the first time a Broadway musical played at a regular theatre venue in Spain. Noted individuals from various realms of show business contributed work: comedian José Luis Coll helped with the translation, and Antonio Mingote designed sets and costumes. A brilliant draftsman and cartoonist, very intelligent and esteemed, Mingote was an icon of Spanish culture in late Francoism, managing, in a brilliant and shrewd way, to say with his drawings more than many other people dared or could say in words. A large cast was headed by José Sazatornil, a popular movie actor who took on Mostel’s role.

Marquerie fancied the original must have been dynamic and funny. But the Spanish cast and crew had not preserved any of it, and offered a boring show (1964, 26). González Ruiz, writing for the Catholic paper *Ya*, did not like the Spanish production, as he thought it did not manage to sustain the attention of the audience and wavered at points. However, he could not but marvel at how the original blended music and dialogue so seamlessly, in an organic and effective manner (1964, 34). In spite of the critic’s reservations, the show held out for almost one hundred performances.

One can note how critics tended to be in agreement in welcoming the Broadway musical. Whatever reservations they may have about specific aspects, they generally believed it constituted a welcome addition to the Spanish scene. This is true of both the more conservative reviewers as well as those occupying a more progressive position within a spectrum that certainly did not allow for serious divergences of taste. What seems a constant as well is the fact that productions were often noted as falling short of doing justice to the originals, a fact that is to be expected given how limited the roster of professionals well-versed in musical theatre was in Spain.

Following a rather erratic pattern of importations, the next specimen to debut in Madrid was the 1948 *Kiss Me, Kate*, music by Cole Porter, book and lyrics by Bella and Samuel Spewack. A beloved and oft-produced piece, it ran for over 1,000 performances after its premiere, reaping iconic status for the song “Brush Up Your Shakespeare.” Some other things are best forgotten, such as the preface

by the Spewacks to the published version, condensing the message of the play as follows: “[S]lap your wife around; she’ll thank you for it” (1953, viii). Lavish praise was bestowed upon the show, unanimously considered the Cole Porter score most clearly attuned to the new era of book musicals (Porter had been one of the masters of earlier musical comedy).

The Spanish version opened in December 1964 at the Teatro Alcázar. Its run was similar to that of previous musicals: a month and a half. Spanish *revistas* could easily run for nine months or more, often surpassing 500 performances. *Mami, llévame al colegio*, by González del Castillo and Muñoz Román, which opened at Teatro Martín in September 1964, reached that figure, as did many others. But the Broadway musical was still consolidating its audience, less bulky but no less dedicated. With *Kiss me, Kate*, José Tamayo returned to the American musical, after *Al sur del Pacífico*. But, *Redhead* and previous injunctions notwithstanding, Tamayo was reluctant to dispense with well-known stars, hiring the popular singer Maruja Díaz.

Leiter mentions the play, inspired by the 1935 Broadway rendition of Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew* by the Lunts, had copyrighted the elaborate choreography devised by Hanya Holms, one that “embraced such diverse styles as classic ballet, modern dance, jitterbugging, soft-shoe, acrobatics, court, and folk dance” (1992, 339). Judging by the reception, one is to doubt such complexity was even distantly honored in Spain. Enrique Llovet argued in *ABC* that the play had become too “Spanish,” with rhythms and musical arrangements more befitting a *zarzuela* than a Broadway musical; and then Díaz’s work was mediocre, accustomed as she was to folksier fare (1963, 103). Reviewers for *Pueblo* and *Ya*, Alfredo Marquerie and Nicolás González Ruiz respectively, were ecstatic about the Spanish production, which they believed epitomized Broadway at its best (1963, 24; 1963, 35). Oddly, nobody mentioned the play was almost twenty years old.

None of the previous offerings did more than introduce Madrid audiences to the Broadway musical and pose it as a viable form for theatrical expression. Neither *La pelirroja* nor *Golfus de Roma* or *Kiss Me, Kate* (the last one inaugurating a tradition of titles being left untranslated) drew much attention, and the excitement generated by *Al Sur del Pacífico* was not sparked by either of them. For a musical to draw similar attention, one needed to wait until 1966, and *Man of La Mancha*.

Dale Wasserman wrote the book for the Off-Broadway musical inspired by Cervantes’s novel, while lyrics were by Joe Darion and music by Mitch Leigh. It opened in November 1965 at the ANTA Washington Square Theatre. While musicals were still largely thought of in connection with lavish, costly displays, shifts of scenery, costumes, etc., this play struck a different chord. In the metatheatrical spirit made popular by *The Fantasticks* but with no act or scene division, *Man of La Mancha* starts with Cervantes serving time in a prison in

Seville, while awaiting trial by the Inquisition. Soon thereafter, scenes from the novelist's life are blended with ones from his famous novel, improvised by the other inmates in austere but suggestive ways. The stripped-down nature of the staging is in keeping with Cervantes's subject matter: the need for dreams and imagination to make up for a bleak reality. Aldonza's line "The world's a dung heap and we are maggots that crawl on it!" (Wasserman 2002, 49) is immediately followed by the beloved song "The Quest (The Impossible Dream)."

George Oppenheimer declared the superb play and production "restore one's faith in and love of the theatre" and mentioned the audience had sat in quasi-religious ecstasy (1965, 3c). For Whitney Bolton, it made clear "what theatre is for, why it lives and endures, how it can enchant and attract" (1965, n/a). The play ran uninterrupted for six years in different venues, and had totaled, by June 1971, when it folded, over 2,300 performances.

The material could not have been dearer to Spaniards, and, in one of the reports entered by the censors, mention was made of a moral obligation to stage such play (Merino Álvarez 2016, 319). Thus, its transfer to the Teatro de la Zarzuela as *El hombre de La Mancha* took only ten months. Resorting to the Zarzuela once more, coupled with numerous notices arguing that Madrid was the first European city where the piece would play, were all intended to give the Off-Broadway borrowing the status of a first-rate offering. José López Rubio's adaptation was first acted out in September 1966, directed by José Osuna. Those responsible for the New York show visited Spain to supervise arrangements. Mitch Leigh directed the orchestra on opening night in Madrid.

The run was prolonged, and, after the engagement at the Zarzuela, it was transferred to the Lope de Vega, where musicals would often play in subsequent decades (for ten years now it has hosted *The Lion King*, which opened therein in 2011). Playwright and set designer Francisco Nieva was responsible for the stark sets. Luis Sagi-Vela played Cervantes / Don Quijote, as Nati Mistral was cast as Dulcinea / Aldonza. Sagi-Vela had retired eight years previously, but the actor agreed to play a last stage role, unable to turn down such an iconic part.

Critics were mostly upset at the fact that Americans had fashioned a rather humble musical out of the jewel of Spanish letters. Laín Entralgo, the Falangist historian and writer who resigned from his post as president of the University of Madrid after a student rebellion was fiercely crushed by the police, believed the play a fitting tribute to the novelist's genius (1966, 21). Ángel del Campo and José María Franco, writing for the conservative daily *Ya*, liked the music, but would have expected a more dignified rendition (1966, 28; 1966, 33). Oblivious to how plays were being borrowed to Spain and treated as objects never to be returned and open to extensive manipulation to suit their new aims, they resented the American borrowing of a literary masterpiece to put it to new use as

inspiration for a fringe musical. Be that as it may, the piece turned into a beloved one for audiences, and critics, whether to complain or just bestow praise, helped the offering draw an attention that previous attempts had mostly failed to attain.

Two more musicals would open in the 1960s, trying to capitalize on the buzz spawned by *El hombre de La Mancha*. Neil Simon had become a household name in Spain after several of his hits triumphed in the mid-1960s. In November 1967, the only musical in which he collaborated, *Sweet Charity*, opened as *Caridad de noche* at the Teatro Español in Barcelona. It transferred to the Lope de Vega in Madrid in February of the following year. Simon had adapted Federico Fellini's 1957 *Le notti di Cabiria*, recipient of the Academy award for best foreign-language film in 1958. Cy Coleman provided the music, and Dorothy Fields the lyrics. It premiered in January 1966 in New York City, staged and choreographed by Bob Fosse.

Sweet Charity has never been regarded as a milestone of the Broadway musical, nor is it among Simon's best-known works. Fosse was responsible for a Brechtian staging, with placards and stage signs punctuating the action, mocking situations or characters, and underlining the theatricality of an otherwise mawkish story: that of the soft-hearted, trusting prostitute who yearns for true love and only encounters one letdown after another. She keeps trying, even when she is finally deserted by the man, Oscar, she fell in love with in Act One (and was about to marry at a given point). He realizes her past will always be in the way of trust and love and decides to walk away. Far from devastated by his desertion, Charity sees it as just one more hindrance to overcome in her path towards happiness, although by that point we have started to suspect such path might wind up in a different place. Simon provides good dialogue, but a loose plot. It was precisely the abundance of such dialogues that brought on the ire of Broadway reviewers, who would have preferred for Fosse to emphasize the theatrical to the detriment of the merely dramatic.

Adapted by composer Gregorio García Segura and writer and librettist Jesús María de Arozamena –one of the last composers of *zarzuelas* in Spain–, the Catalanian production incurred vulgarity and tastelessness. Not strangely, producer Matías Colsada, who was at the helm, had specialized in frivolous, inconsequential musical shows or *revistas* in the Paralelo in Barcelona. Marujita Díaz was cast in yet a new Broadway musical. Ricardo Ferrante choreographed, but his work was much more conventional and less idiosyncratic than Bob Fosse's. Yet, the show ran for several months, being the most successful of the musical plays from Broadway presented in Spain theretofore. It could enlist the small but devoted group of followers of the new format, plus the Simon fans previous hits had garnered in Spain.

Critics were unanimous in noting the play dumbed down Fellini's material. *La vanguardia española's* Martínez Tomás averred he was content to forget the movie and judge it on its own terms, noting it was briskly and competently staged,

explicitly declaring it to be a breakthrough in the development of musical theatre in Spain (1967, 49). Marquerie argued the show could measure up to any big musical on Broadway or the West End; it was frivolous but not too much, of great technical quality, superbly produced and with a dexterous actress at the helm (1968, 25). *ABC's* López Sancho lauded the staging, but was disappointed with the shallow Simon text and an actress-protagonist that caused embarrassment, the rest of the cast being even worse than her (1968, 87).

Ignoring *El hombre de La Mancha*, an anonymous article in *S.P.* claimed in 1969 that Spain remained out of touch with the new generation of American musicals. Proceeding from Off and Off-Off Broadway, they deployed austere formats in order to tackle contemporary, bold subjects. *Hair* was mentioned as an apt example. A production was allegedly attempted in Spain in 1967 (although what was probably meant was 1968) by experimental playwright Luis Matilla and director José Luis Morera, but it fell through (Anonymous 1969, 50). Produced by Joseph Papp for his Public Theater in New York, directed by Gerald Freedman, *Hair* opened in October 1967, book and lyrics by Gerome Ragni and James Rado, music by Galt McDermot. Offered only for an eight-week engagement, a subsequent Broadway staging was attacked as having “sold out” to the commercial scene. Such move indeed “brought a new audience into the mainstream musical theatre”, although only by depicting a “sanitized version” of the counterculture (Degen 2000, 443).

The only shred of a plot is the story of Claude, a young man about to be conscripted for Vietnam. By the end of the play, he has his hair cut, in what is a symbolic amputation of his identity. *Hair* is about the need for a space where the individual can be free, happy, and withstand the endless pressures by society to conform. Some of the songs may be harmless, like the one in which the boys declare they only want “HARMONY AND UNDERSTANDING / SYMPATHY AND TRUST ABOUNDING / NO MORE FALSEHOODS OR DERISIONS / GOLDEN LIVING DREAMS OR VISIONS / MYSTIC CRYSTAL REVELATION / AND THE MIND'S TRUE LIBERATION” (*Hair* 1970, 3). Less palatable for a Catholic Spain were lines such as those in which a character crosses himself and then goes through the motions of the sacrament of communion, while intoning: “SODOMY / FELLATIO / CUNNILINGUS / PEDERASTY / FATHER / WHY DO THESE WORDS / SOUND SO NASTY / MASTURBATION CAN BE FUN...” (*Hair* 1970, 10).

Nudity and sexual provocation kept *Hair* on the radar of censors in Spain, who were adamant to ban it on every occasion an attempt was made to produce it. The 1960 *The Fantasticks*, also endowed with a presentational style, was meanwhile launched by artist Francisco Nieva, singer Elsa Baeza, and actors Eusebio Poncela and José María Pou. Admittedly advanced in its staging, it was far more harmless

than *Hair*. Yet, over time it would prove the longest running musical in US history.⁷ Inspired by Edmond Rostand's *Les Romanesques*, its filiation is rather convoluted. Tom Jones explains he drew inspiration from Wilder's *Our Town*, the tableaux of *Sunday in the Park with George*, as well as the improvisational and playful *commedia dell'arte* (*The Fantasticks* 1990, 10-11). He may well have forgotten to mention other sources: Dylan Thomas, William Saroyan, the Williams of *Camino Real*, and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, to name a few. Broadway reviewers were baffled and, as a general rule, not very supportive, although *The Village Voice's* Michael Smith explained this was not an "under-produced Broadway musical" but a wholly new kind of offering taking advantage of new artistic opportunities derived from the austerity of the staging (1960, n/a). Indeed, the writing of *The Fantasticks* is unusually good, with one eye looking back at the dramatic tradition and another at Brecht, albeit the latter is tackled in a rather playful mood.

The show opened at the Teatro Reina Victoria in Madrid in June 1969, directed by Antonio Malonda and Francisco Nieva, as *Los fantásticos*. Federico Galindo, writing for *Dígame*, an innovative weekly founded in 1940, noted a salutary combination of genres (operetta, revue, musical comedy...) (1969, 38). López Sancho could not but admit that it was provocative, albeit marred in its execution by a mediocre ensemble (1969, 71). López Sancho's opinions evince the absence of an acting tradition in Spain that could successfully pull off the combination of talents and skills required by a work of this kind. An anonymous reviewer for *Mundo* seized the chance provided by the opening of *The Fantasticks* to review a Parisian, mind-blowing one of *Hair*, arguing that it went beyond the Living Theater in its brashness (1969, 45). While the former play closed soon in Spain, in all likelihood owing to the deficiencies noted, the latter was posited as "the real thing" that Spanish audiences would welcome and probably deserved.

Talk of *Hair* continued to recur in the print media and, by 1970, newspapers and journals regularly reported on various versions across Europe. But the sexual freedom espoused by the piece remained far too shocking for a dictatorship that had left behind most of its ideological anchors by then, except for its adherence to the Catholic faith. Savvy producers, however, found ways to turn a profit out of this glaring gap. The show ... *¡Del amor fuerte!* opened in March 1970, promising strident lighting, rock music, dance, acrobatics, and audience involvement. It was not *Hair* but seemed to contain everything *Hair* was noted for. Months later, in June 1970, a similar show opened at the Piccadilly club, the highly successful *Piccadilly's Review*, directed by Manuel Bohr, with an

7 In 1990, as a commemorative volume was issued, it had had over 11,000 productions in the US, and almost 700 elsewhere in the world, including countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and China. For further insight into the show, see Farber and Viagas.

appropriately foreign title.⁸ This time the suggestion went further and some ads proclaimed it was inspired by *Hair* itself. The process of borrowing is here complicated: *Piccadilly's Review* borrowed the sensibility of a foreign show in order to turn a profit out of the fact that borrowing it was banned. Curiously enough, censors turned a blind eye to all such endeavors.

López Sancho noted the American show was far superior to this crass imitation, which was, nevertheless, entertaining, inspired by the hippie movement, both sentimental and daring, with psychedelic lighting and attempts to create a communion with the audience; songs from *Hair* were indeed used (1970, 84). Absent were of course nudity, political discussion, and the churlish character of the dialogues. The theatre critic for *Madrid*, the only newspaper to be closed by Franco's regime, in 1971, Elías Gómez Picazo, doubted Spanish audiences were so puerile as to be shocked by any of those, and urged censors to authorize it (1970, 23), obviously to no avail. López Sancho, who wrote for the conservative newspaper *ABC*, agreed with his colleague that the show should have been permitted (1970, 84), further evincing the baffling doggedness in not allowing anything with the title *Hair* to be staged. For Adolfo Marsillach, censors were making more of *Hair* than seemed warranted. According to the Spanish director and actor, the play was flimsy from a dramatic point of view, perhaps shocking for the prim and proper but hardly revolutionary (1970, 18-19).

As though to appease the growing thirst for daring musicals that Spanish critics felt, in 1974, the authorities fostered the production of the 1971 *Godspell*, lyrics by John Michael Tebelak, music by Stephen Schwartz. Based on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, it drew inspiration from the life of Jesus Christ to offer a retelling of it set in contemporary New York to the tunes of modern music. Not a blockbuster properly speaking, it originally ran for some 500 performances. For the Spanish authorities, it looked harmless, since, as Martin Gottfried explains, it was "like 'Hair' with a haircut [...] accusably calculated to be inoffensive. No nudity, no dirty words, no suggestions of sex, no challenges to the establishment [...] even conventionally religious" (1976, 48).

The Jesus Christ of *Godspell*, never referred to as Jesus Christ (a character is once about to do so but is rapidly hushed by others), is a hippie God, who brings a message of salvation to a society increasingly farther from his teachings. To express himself he just quotes from the Bible. High-spirited and cheerful, the play's circus-like mood blends seamlessly with the biblical intertext, creating an enticing but ultimately sanitized spectacle, with no subversive message anywhere

8 Matilde Fluixá was one of the performers. See Fluixá, 2007, esp 39-41, for some morbid anecdotes about the cast and their lively parties while the show lasted (it was eventually closed down by the authorities). Most of its members would die of AIDS and/or drug overdose shortly thereafter.

in sight. The most reactionary could object to the gospel being taken lightly. Anyone slightly more open-minded would realize the play bends over backwards to prove the Christian message is entirely pertinent to contemporary times. That it may be looking too much to the past is evinced in Douglas Watt's wry question: "Didn't actors stop strolling, lying down and running up and down in theater aisles with the '60s?" (1976, 26).

The Teatro Marquina saw opening night in October 1974, the Spanish iteration directed by Tebelak himself. Catholic writer José María Pemán --the most notable of intellectuals ideologically affiliated with Franco-- and writer/journalist/clergyman José Luis Martín Descalzo were commissioned to translate it. Not at all professional translators, and furthermore the text consisting only of biblical quotes, they had clearly been enlisted for ideological surveillance, to guarantee nothing could offend Catholics. Concerning the performance, as Juan Ribó played the Christ-like figure, a roster of highly promising actors surrounded him (Isabel Mestres, Mara Goyanes, Inma de Sanz, Nicolás Dueñas, and others). Its Madrid run was equivalent to New York's, which is highly significant: New York had well in excess of fifteen million inhabitants in 1974, and Madrid less than four million. After the phenomenal success, three companies were formed in order to take the show on the road.⁹

According to theatre scholar César Oliva, the reason why *Godspell* was such a theatrical milestone was the expectation generated by *Hair*, as well as the fact that the former was widely advertised and promoted as a largely similar kind of work (2006, 40). The minimal stir among the most reactionary played into the hands of the authorities, reinforcing the point that what was being offered was no less groundbreaking than *Hair*. When the play opened in Barcelona in October 1975, critic Xavier Fàbregas argued the show boasted modernity but was ultimately reactionary, outdated, and timid (1990, 228). Theatre historian Gregorio Torres Nebrera believes it co-opted hippie values but to disseminate the very opposite message (2006, 29).

It must be borne in mind that the above opinions constituted rather the exception than the rule. As most media were of a conservative bent, they mostly commended *Godspell* as a wholesome show everyone should see. For Juan Molla, reviewing it for the Catalanian periodical *El ciervo* --which is still published--, the piece drew from the various branches of theatre popular since the 1960s (*happenings*, improvisation, circus, dance, parody...) to deal with religion in a way most young people related to, proving to them God's teachings could be fun and

9 It opened on April 15, 1975 at the Teatro Álvarez Quintero in Seville. While most other shows would stay in the city for two or three days, *Godspell* played until May 27, in the kind of run only a few venues in Madrid could aspire to at the time.

appealing (1974, 19). Some of these critics --too many reviews are extant to allow for more than summing up their talking points-- invoked *Jesus Christ Superstar* as another musical harping on the figure of Jesus Christ, noting this vogue could not but benefit the Church. Some insisted the Francoist establishment was overlooking this last fact by adamantly refusing to authorize *Jesus Christ Superstar*, which even Pope Paul VI had explicitly endorsed. On a more theatrical level, critics were divided. While *Primer acto*'s José Monleón found the performativity of the piece refreshing and highly postmodern, expressing satisfaction with the work of the Spanish cast (1974, 65-66), *Hoja del lunes*'s Antonio Valencia explained that, for all its theatricality and pyrotechnics, he had left the theatre feeling that what he had been offered was utterly shallow and inconsequential (1974, 31).

Godspell, however, played a pivotal role in easing the arrival of later musicals. Throughout 1975, not only did *Jesus Christ Superstar* finally open in Spain; another attempt at a *Hair*-like show was made. *Rock clásico de los 60* opened at the Teatro Victoria in Barcelona in April 1975, soon followed by dates in Madrid and elsewhere in Spain. Sixteen actors brought from England and America sang famous *Hair* tunes, not before their subversive potential and sexual daring were toned down. The show was conceived for American military bases in Europe. After a tour of such installations, they decided to play in countries like Spain, where restrictions still existed, a sort of "'Hair' para subdesarrollados," as Pérez de Olaguer wrote for *Mundo* (1975, 49). The company (The American Triballlove Rock Musical) included Steve Curry, whose face inspired the famous *Hair* billboard, and Demetrius Christopholus, who played the lead in the London staging. Xavier Fàbregas found it a competent show, distilling the oppositional stance of *Hair* in a more acceptable fashion; but he was quick to point out that it was not going to shake down the foundations of society (1990, 185), as Franco seemed to believe.

Spanish people were made to wait for years to experience a national production of *Hair*, and it cannot be discussed here since it falls outside our temporal framework. In November 1975, however, a show in English opened at the Teatro Monumental in Madrid, after brief but highly successful engagements in Valencia and other cities. The title was *Concierto en rock sobre el famoso musical Hair* (some billboards just said *Hair*). Directed by Ignacio Occhi, choreographed by Amy Farber, it starred Steve Curry and other members of the original cast from both London and New York. There is no way to know for sure, but I strongly suspect this was a modified, slightly altered version of *Rock clásico de los 60*, but with more of the true *Hair*. It incorporated some nudity, carried out in semi-darkness. Hailed as fresh and innovative, actors broke through the fourth wall to involve the audience. Antonio Valencia wrote it was one of the most impressive and daring musicals ever seen in Spain, with a superb cast. It dealt with sex, love, truth, freedom, and indicted a materialistic, unfeeling society (1975, 43).

Proving that reviewers had grown out of the ideological straitjacket that had impinged upon their work in previous decades, most had now very kind and perceptive things to say about this non-*Hair*. Just to quote one of them, *Pueblo*'s Eduardo G. Rico expatiated upon the successful combination of languages deployed, blending music, dance, sensual displays, ritual, as well as political propaganda (1975, 31), the last being one that did not seem to upset the reviewer in the least. Ya's Luis Carlos Buraya, while also uttering encouraging remarks, noted the world of the play had passed, as even those who once believed in those values did not necessarily do so anymore, or had evolved towards new forms of artistic commitment or social activism (1975, 41).

Within the same month, November 1975, *Jesus Christ Superstar* finally opened in Madrid. Originating as a single song, "Superstar," composed in 1969 by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, producer David Land saw potential in it and convinced Rice and Lloyd Webber to write a rock opera centered on the last days of Jesus Christ. A recording was released in 1970. The rest of the story is well-known.¹⁰ It became an immediate hit, selling millions of copies. Tom O'Horgan directed the successful theatrical version, which opened in October 1971 at the Mark Hellinger Theatre. Iterations sprang up everywhere in America and the rest of the world. In 1973, Norman Jewison directed a remarkable motion picture.

Unlike *Godspell*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* probed the figure of Jesus Christ in depth, and concluded for him to have constituted the first media event in the history of mankind, amplified by his followers through a widespread campaign to divulge a novel creed. But how can a man acclaimed by so many remember his humanity? To what extent did the message become less important than its bearer? Jesus Christ is so idolized, revered and loved that he ends up losing sight of who he is. While not entirely irrelevant as an exploration of early Christianity, the play is similarly germane for an understanding of a media-ridden culture like that of the 1970s.

Jesus Christ, in Rice and Lloyd Webber's play, constitutes a not entirely likeable figure, at times arrogant and impudent. When his death comes, he almost laments it, given how pleasurable his earthly time has been. Judas is similarly re-imagined as not necessarily a traitor but one who resented Jesus's increasing popularity and betrayal of the message he was supposed to convey, part of the reason why he turns him over to the authorities (although his motivations are compounded).

In 1971, the popular Spanish periodical *Gaceta ilustrada* brought out a translation of a feature published by *Time* on *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and similar articles can be found in other journals from the early 1970s, paving the way for a future rendition of the piece. Even Academy-award-winning director José Luis

10 For an extended analysis of the musical, see Nassour and Broderick 1973.

Garci published a feature claiming Jesus Christ was the sensation of the day in the US (1972, 58). By 1974, the vinyl record and cassette with the soundtrack were distributed in Spain. Yet, maybe on account of the abovementioned approach to the biblical material, hardly disrespectful but peculiar, the show remained banned from the stage. It was one of the most resounding and conspicuous prohibitions in the final years of Francoism. Even when it was finally authorized, the company was forced to adjust minor things, do without the machine guns and abandon the idea of attiring Herod in drag.

After a three-year wait, the go-ahead necessitated pressure at the highest level by producer Jaime Azpilicueta and star Camilo Sesto. Even so, they could not prevent the opening, months before their show, of Pablo Villamar's *Jesucristo libertador* at the Teatro Momumental in Madrid, in August 1975. The playtext has never been published, so its specific content remains a matter for speculation. It apparently drew from *Godspell*, *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, capitalizing on the expectations and controversy surrounding them, but offering an approach to Jesus Christ more attuned to what the Spanish right might have deemed acceptable, as Villamar was a Falangist (Falange being the name of the Spanish Fascist party).

When *Jesucristo Superstar* opened in Madrid a few months later, in November 1975, as Franco was dying, Villamar attacked it viciously. The tenor of such attacks may well give us an idea of where the Spanish playwright stood, and how his play may have differed from the American musical. I will spare the reader some of his insults against Sesto; but, since it is infrequent to read such opinions, some of them are worth quoting, as the one where he declared to be among those “que no consienten en exhibir a su mujer en cueros, ni dejan violar a sus hijas, ni aceptan a las prostitutas elevadas a la categoría de heroínas nacionales, y van contra el aborto y el homosexualismo y otras plagas que nos viene trayendo el mundo occidental” (1975, 79; my italics).

The answer to Villamar was quick in coming. Manolo Collado was a savvy, valiant producer, who, in the last years of Francoism, staged forward-thinking plays such as Mart Crowley's *The Boys in the Band*, Peter Shaffer's *Equus*, and Bertolt Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, the latter adapted by Camilo José Cela. He accused Villamar and his likes of stalling the modernization of the country, which he and others in show business were aiding thanks to work such as that on the controversial American musical; answering more directly to an accusation of Collado letting his wife go naked in front of an audience, his answer was that he married her out of love and not to tell her what to do (Various, “Camilo Sesto” 1975, 86),¹¹ which sounds disarmingly commonsensical even by today's standards.

11 Villamar was referring to Collado's production of Peter Shaffer's *Equus* in 1975 being the first time nudity was allowed on a Spanish stage (Alonso Tejada 1977, 251). After the

Opening night of *Jesucristo Superstar* at the Teatro Alcalá Palace in Madrid was a sensational event (unlike the more unremarkable openings of subsequent iterations of the play both in 1984 and 2007), attended both by the intelligentsia (playwright Antonio Buero Vallejo) and celebrities (folk singers and celebrities Rocío Jurado and Lola Flores). Camilo Sesto as Jesus Christ was at the zenith of his career, but Ángela Carrasco and Teddy Bautista also drew attention to their supporting roles (Mary Magdalene and Judas, respectively). Technically, fault was found with a number of things. But this was beside the point before an artistic event so eagerly anticipated. Dozens of protesters picketed the theatre on opening night, as a kneeling clergyman prayed the rosary in a last-ditch attempt to save some souls.¹² It was all to no avail, as it would run for 200 performances. It could have been longer if Sesto had not been such a sought-out star, with numerous commitments. He was so much a part of the show's success, given his idiosyncratic protagonist, that replacing him was out of the question.

Díez-Crespo, writing for *El alcázar*, told Spanish producers they would do well in learning from this show how to do a proper musical (1975, 27). In what had become paradigmatic when lauding foreign plays in Spain, he noted the production was superior to those on Broadway and London, which is, at the very least, hard to believe. Other critics mentioned, however, that Azpilicueta's staging was highly original, a far cry from the custom in succeeding decades of franchising corporate musicals so as the staging was replicated the world over, with next to no differences.

Favorable notices were outnumbered by unfavorable ones. Moncho Alpuente considered the play illustrated how capitalism commodified the counterculture (qtd. Patterson 2010, 138).¹³ Valencia thought the translation worse than bad, the

advent of democracy, the nudity of Victoria Vera drew crowds to the Teatro Reina Victoria, where she played in Antonio Gala's *Why Do You Run, Ulysses* [*¿Por qué corres, Ulises?*] in 1976, turning a mediocre play into a blockbuster (Alonso Tejada 1977, 252). At about the same time, Jorge Grau's *Blood and Passion* [*La trastienda*] was released, whose major claim to relevance was being the first time an actress, M^a José Cantudo this time, appeared completely nude before the camera in a Spanish movie.

12 Protests had also happened six months earlier upon the release of the film, whose dubbing altered some of the original lines. It was not infrequent at this time to see theatrical productions banned as their film versions were authorized. The reason was that the authorities were more in control of a movie version (thanks to dubbing) than of a live show that would be performed dozens or hundreds of times.

13 In a matter of only a year, *Jesucristo Superstar* went from being a dangerous play to being performed in parishes and schools all over Spain. One such production was organized by the Los Olivos school, in Málaga. The lead was played by Antonio Banderas, who, it appears, decided to become an actor after attending a performance of the play in London (Oliva, A. 2003, 100-101). He has recently opened a theatre in Málaga, the Teatro del Soho, devoted to the production of Broadway musicals. Their next project happens to be a new Spanish adaptation of *Godspell*.

music awful and out of tune, and the play an attempt to make money by stirring up a foolish controversy; the piece was no more than a collection of old-fashioned platitudes, stemming from a belief that hippie aesthetics was still in fashion (1975, 51). ABC's Adolfo Prego was shocked before a lack of the slightest consideration for the Catholic faith, and translated the thunderous applause as the audience condemning the show for its triviality but endorsing the technical effort, while berating Sesto for copying the movie and Carrasco for being maudlin (1975, 49). His ability to discern such nuances in mere applause was decidedly uncanny.

Surveying this early period of musical theatre borrowings provides a bleak contrast with succeeding decades, when offerings would prove timid and bland, while also, anyhow, attaining profits that would have been unthinkable to those who, in the 1950s and 1960s, saw the new form as promising but scarcely conducive to commercial success. It would have been impossible for a Spanish spectator to really gage where the Broadway musical came from, how it had evolved, or its true contributions to the American scene. The pattern for the importation of musicals was rather erratic, starting years after the form became a popular one in America, and then following a chaotic order in which earlier pieces were produced after later ones had debuted. Audiences must have also been confused as to the kind of show a Broadway musical was. While *South Pacific* seemed to herald spectacularity and lavishness as staples, the incomprehensible rendition of *Man of La Mancha* as almost a chamber piece started to bring to Spain Off-Broadway musicals when spectators here had not had the chance to assimilate what a Broadway musical actually was. Also to be noted is the persistence of critics, or most of them anyhow, in peddling these odd specimens of Broadway as signaling the way for the future of musical theatre in our country, which only decades later seems to be heeded with an ever-growing number of native musicals based on Spanish material as well as from elsewhere (*El tiempo entre costuras*, *El medico* or *Antoine, el musical*, to name only some recent examples).¹⁴

While the early musicals produced in Spain sparked conversations of a merely formal kind –not a negligible topic where an art form is concerned, though–, the early 1970s provided a political arena wherein the importation of musicals or their prohibition would play out. Such plays as *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* became major actors in the cultural policies of late Francoism, and an excellent viewing platform when it comes to examining how Francoism tried to survive in its last years, not giving up its ideological fetters completely but trying to assuage growingly vocal criticism. The fact that even conservative newspapers would berate the Spanish regime for its intolerance with a rather harmless show such

¹⁴ Before that, however, the 1980s would bring musical theatre of a more idiosyncratic, less imitative kind, especially by companies such as Dagoll Dagom. See Mateo 2008, 322.

as *Hair* illustrates the complicated rapport between the dictator and those who had once been tame and wary of upsetting the establishment. The disarming insistence on prohibiting an original while allowing its copies remains a puzzling fact, similarly baffling many contemporaries at the time.

It would be to misconstrue facts to believe the advent of democracy automatically ushered in musicals of a more conformist kind. Provocative and inspiring ones lay ahead, ones that would enlarge mental horizons as it came to gender and sexuality (*A Chorus Line* and *Rent*), not to speak of the challenges posed by the work of Stephen Sondheim, who would become a familiar name in Spain in the 1990s. A new chapter in this history begs to be written, one that may well take over where we now leave off.

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