

‘Piano ou Clavecin?’ Joaquín Nin’s Feud with Wanda Landowska’s Harpsichord

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Abstract Wanda Landowska and Joaquín Nin were, in the context of the Parisian Schola Cantorum during the first decade of the twentieth century, two of the leading artists performing the harpsichord repertoire. This established them as pioneers of its concert practice, but their irreconcilable attitudes to performance – Landowska’s supposedly historical/reconstructive (employing the harpsichord) and Nin’s updated (employing the modern piano) – embroiled them in a fierce controversy conducted in French and Spanish journals between November 1911 and October 1912. This article examines a large quantity of unedited correspondence together with the relevant press articles in the context of the two performers’ agendas. The results suggest that this controversy was an unprecedented marketing strategy orchestrated by Nin against, but reliant upon, Landowska’s success at the time when he was about to make his *début* in Spain. However, the unforeseen and long-lasting consequences of this controversy brought priceless publicity for Landowska’s cause: the revival of the harpsichord.

Wanda Landowska (1879–1959) and Joaquín Nin y Castellanos (1879–1949) were, in the context of the Parisian Schola Cantorum during the first decade of the twentieth century, two of the leading artists performing and disseminating the keyboard repertoire, especially that of the French harpsichord school. Georges Jean-Aubry stated in 1909 that of ‘all our seventeenth- and eighteenth-century harpsichordists’ Nin and Landowska were the only honest performers.¹ But their careers had already diverged. Landowska (see [Figure 1](#)) was established as a solo recitalist implementing a revolutionary interpretative proposal and exhibiting an exotic stage persona that

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¹ ‘Chambonnières, Couperin, Dandrieu, Daquin, Rameau, etc., tous nos clavecinistes du XVIIe et du XVIIIe siècle, ont trouvé en lui [Nin] le seul interprète véridique que nous ayons, avec Mme Wanda Landowska.’ Georges Jean-Aubry, ‘J. Joachim Nin’, *Le guide musical*, Brussels, 7 November 1909, quoted in J. Joaquín Nin, *Huit années d’action musicale (1903–1911)* (Brussels: Th. Lombaerts, 1911), 46.

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Figure 1 Wanda Landowska, 1905. Barcelona, Centre de Documentació de l'Orfeó Català, Fons Fotogràfic de l'Orfeó Català, F_LANDOWSKA05.

featured the harpsichord as a concert instrument to suit her own vision of the music of the past.² Nin (see Figure 2) employed the concert-lecture as his favoured format to promote his ambition as a scholar-performer. Appointed an honorary professor at the Schola Cantorum in 1906 and at the Université Nouvelle de Bruxelles in 1909, he contributed greatly to the uncovering of eighteenth-century Spanish music during the 1920s through his pioneering keyboard music editions and concert programmes (always played on the piano), as well as his own compositions.³ Furthermore, their

² See Annegret Fauser, 'Creating Madame Landowska', *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture*, 10 (2006), 1–23.

³ Sonia Gonzalo Delgado, '¿Un nuevo repertorio? La inclusión de los clavecinistas ibéricos del siglo XVIII en la actividad concertística española: La figura de Joaquín Nin', *Revista de musicología*, 39 (2016), 173–209. Nin published the first anthologies of eighteenth-century Spanish keyboard music: *Classiques espagnols du piano*, 2 vols. (Paris: Max Eschig, 1925–9), i: *Seize sonates anciennes*



Figure 2 Joaquín Nin, 1907. Barcelona, Centre de Documentació de l'Orfeó Català, Fons Fotogràfic de l'Orfeó Català, F_NIN01. The inscription reads 'A mon gran mestre Carlos G. Vidiella. En penyora de fidel devoció artística y filial afecció. J. J. Nin MCMVII.'

critical reception has had very different results. Landowska has become a legend, an 'uncommon visionary' who has attracted hundreds of reviews, exhibitions and documentaries encompassing her impact on the early music revival,⁴ whereas Nin has remained virtually unknown until very recently.⁵

d'auteurs espagnols: Padre Antonio Soler, Mateo Albéniz, Cantallos, Blas Serrano, Mateo Ferrer; ii: Dix-sept sonates et pièces anciennes d'auteurs espagnols: Padre Vicente Rodríguez, Padre Antonio Soler, Freixanet, Padre Narciso Casanovas, Padre Rafael Anglés, Padre Felipe Rodríguez, Padre José Gallés.

⁴ Among many publications, see *Landowska on Music*, ed. Denise Restout and Robert Hawkings (New York: Stein & Day, 1964); *Die Dame mit dem Cembalo: Wanda Landowska und die Alte Musik*, ed. Martin Elste (Mainz: Schott, 2010); and *Wanda Landowska et la renaissance de la musique ancienne*, ed. Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger (Arles-Paris: Actes Sud, 2011).

⁵ Barely mentioned in international publications, Joaquín Nin's activity was appraised in the panel discussion 'El pasado idealizado: Joaquín Nin, José Subirá y la recuperación del siglo XVIII a

Back in 1909, and within the context of the historical concert understood as a programming strategy that crystallized in the late nineteenth century,⁶ Landowska advocated the revival of the harpsichord as the instrument leading to what is now called historically informed performance practice; Nin, rejecting Landowska's supposed historicism, supported an 'updated' performance on the piano. This difference resulted in a fierce controversy conducted between November 1911 and October 1912 simultaneously in French and Spanish journals, specifically the *Revue musicale S.I.M.* of Paris (hereafter *RMSIM*), the *Revista musical* of Bilbao (*RM*) and the *Revista musical catalana* (*RMC*), the journal of the Orfeo Català in Barcelona.⁷ This personal feud between the two competing artists is essential to the understanding of their different approaches to performance and the irreconcilable attitudes towards the appreciation of early keyboard repertoires that was to extend beyond French and Spanish boundaries.⁸ For this purpose, a large quantity of unedited correspondence preserved in the Biblioteca de Catalunya (Barcelona) and in Landowska's papers at the Library of Congress (Washington DC) has been studied and compared with the relevant press articles in the context of the performers' agendas. Orchestrated by Nin against Landowska, the controversy was used as an aggressive marketing strategy initiated at precisely the time Nin was about to make his *début* in his former home country, Spain. The unforeseen consequences lasted for decades.

'La voilà bien la polémique des Revues!'

Nin's soirée dedicated to the music of J. S. Bach at the Parisian Salle Aeolian on 21 March 1906 was reviewed in *Le courrier musical*.⁹ This concert was the second in

comienzos del siglo XX' at the international congress Performing Eighteenth-Century Early Iberian Music, Barcelona, 14–16 July 2014, and in María Cáceres-Piñuel, 'El *revival* de música del siglo XVIII en España durante el periodo de entreguerras: Cuatro casos de estudio relacionados con la red social de José Subirá', *Revista de musicología*, 39 (2016), 143–72; Liz Mary Díaz Pérez de Alejo, 'Estudio del epistolario inédito de Joaquín Nin Castellanos conservado en el Centre de Documentació de l'Orfeo Català', *Entre Espacios: La historia latino-americana en el contexto global: Actas del XVII Congreso Internacional de AHILA, Berlin, 9–13 Septiembre 2014*, ed. Stefan Rinke (Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin, 2016), 1857–77; and Díaz Pérez de Alejo, 'Joaquín Nin-Castellanos (1879–1949): Biografía y estrategias compositivas del pensamiento a la creación' (Ph.D. dissertation, Universidad de Valladolid, 2017).

⁶ Sonia Gonzalo Delgado, 'Programme Notes: Ciclo de miércoles "El origen de la *early music*": Enero 2019' (Madrid: Fundación Juan March, 2019), 8–10. From François-Joseph Fétis and Ignaz Moscheles in the mid-nineteenth century to Anton Rubinstein and Louis Diémer in the late nineteenth, several pianists accommodated their agendas to the historical concert. See Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁷ For the *RMSIM*, see <<https://gallica.bnf.fr>>; for the *RM*, <<http://hemerotecadigital.bne.es/index.vm>>; and for the *RMC*, <<https://arca.bnc.cat/>>.

⁸ This controversy was briefly appraised in Juan José Carreras, 'Zur Frühgeschichte der Alten Musik in Spanien', *Ereignis und Exegese, Musikalische Interpretation, Interpretation der Musik: Festschrift für Hermann Danuser zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Camille Bork, Tobias Robert Klein, Burkhard Meischein, Andreas Meyer and Tobias Plebuch (Berlin: Edition Argus, 2011), 134–48 (pp. 145–6), and in Liz Mary Díaz Pérez de Alejo, 'El "duelo" entre Joaquín Nin y Wanda Landowska: ¿El viejo clave o el piano moderno?', *Revista de musicología*, 39 (2016), 211–34.

⁹ F. V., 'Les concerts J.-Joachim Nin', *Le courrier musical*, Paris, 1 April 1906, 255–6.

Nin's ambitious series 'Étude des formes musicales au piano depuis le XVI^e siècle jusqu'à nos jours', originally programmed as a 12-concert series, though only five of the concerts actually took place.¹⁰ This review echoed Nin's artistic choice to play Bach on the modern piano, as explained in the introduction to his concert, in direct opposition to Landowska's preference for the harpsichord, as advocated in her article 'Bach et ses interprètes':¹¹

In addition, the very interesting preface, in which Mr Nin introduces us to his ideas and his artistic intentions ahead of his programme, shows that this is not a random choice. It is necessary that we pay particular attention to this manifesto, since it will, undoubtedly, meet some opponents. It claims that the piano has an absolute right to appropriate the music written for the different keyboard instruments in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We believe we remember that a booklet published under the signature of Mrs Wanda Landowska last year in the *Mercure du France* expressed a completely opposite opinion. Such is the controversy in journals! Only Mrs Landowska is a harpsichordist: she too opposes the 'propaganda of the deed'.¹²

Nin, like many others, regarded the harpsichord as a 'sonically weak and mechanically imperfect instrument, poorly suited for the works of the master', in the words Edward L. Kottick used to describe the early twentieth-century general view of the harpsichord.¹³ Nin justified his use of the piano in the performance of sixteenth- to eighteenth-century keyboard literature on the basis of the commonplace, 'Had Bach only known of the modern piano ...'.

In addition to his unfinished series 'Étude des formes musicales au piano' (1904–7), Nin was involved between 1906 and 1910 in concert-lectures across Europe alongside Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi (1877–1944) and Jean-Aubry (1882–1950) promoting French, Italian and German eighteenth-century music played on the piano.¹⁴ He also

¹⁰ They took place between December 1904 and June 1907. See Montserrat Bergadà, 'Joaquín Nin o el Dandi erudito', *Scherzo piano*, 2/6 (2005), 30–7.

¹¹ Wanda Landowska, 'Bach et ses interprètes: Sur l'interprétation des œuvres de clavecin de J. S. Bach', *Mercure de France*, 15 November 1905, 214–30.

¹² 'Au surplus, le très intéressant préambule où M. Nin nous fait connaître, en tête de son programme, ses idées et ses intentions artistiques, montre bien que ce choix n'est pas l'effet du hasard. Il faut insister un peu sur cette petite profession de foi, car elle rencontrera sans doute quelques contradicteurs: il y est affirmé catégoriquement, le droit absolu du piano à s'approprier de nos jours toute la musique écrite pour les différents instruments à cordes et à clavier des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles. Nous croyons nous souvenir qu'un fascicule du *Mercure du France* émettait l'an dernier, sous la signature de Mme Wanda Landowska une opinion tout à fait opposée. La voilà bien la polémique des Revues! Seulement Mme Landowska est claveciniste: elle oppose, elle aussi, la "propagande par le fait".' F. V., 'Les concerts J.-Joachim Nin', 255.

¹³ Edward L. Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 415.

¹⁴ According to the music programmes found in the Joaquín Nin-Culmell and José Joaquín Nin y Castellanos family papers kept at the University of California Riverside (MS 076, box 13, folder 6), Nin programmed four concert-lectures together with Calvocoressi in Paris (31 January 1906, at the Université Populaire, and 4 February 1907, at the École des Hautes Études Sociales) and Brussels (25 and 27 February 1907, at the Université Nouvelle de Bruxelles). With Jean-Aubry, he programmed five concert-lectures, focused on eighteenth-century French harpsichord music: in Paris (12 June 1908, at the Salle des Agriculteurs), Brussels (8 and 10 February 1909, at the

took his vision of performing early repertoires to Havana (Cuba), performing some historical concerts there in 1905 and founding the Sociedad Filarmónica in 1910. But on his return to Europe in summer that year, Nin had neither yet made his *début* in Spain – leaving aside a couple of concerts in 1897 and 1899 when he was still a student of Carles Vidiella in Barcelona – nor established a successful career as a performer, despite his two honorary professorships at the Parisian Schola Cantorum and the Université Nouvelle de Bruxelles. By contrast, Landowska was a successful performer, frequently invited to the major European capitals and well received in Spain, particularly in the context of the Orfeo Català in Barcelona: she *débuted* at the Palau de la Música Catalana in December 1909 and represented the sonorous counterpart of the antiquarian aesthetics supporting Catalan modernism.¹⁵

Moreover, Landowska's participation from 1908 in the Bach Festival (Bachfest) established her as the foremost advocate of the harpsichord as the instrument on which Bach's works should be performed.¹⁶ In 1910, at the Duisburg Bach Festival, she challenged those who maintained that Bach's works were written for the clavichord. She proposed that her opponents play the *Italian Concerto*, BWV 971 (specifically written for a two-manual harpsichord), the *Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue* in D minor, BWV 903 (already established in the piano repertoire) and any toccata or fugue on a 'Silbermann clavichord from Bach's time' that she brought with her, which had been lent by her friend the French critic and director of the *RMSIM* Jules Écorcheville.¹⁷ This was, according to Arnold Dolmetsch (1858–1940), a 'small "gebunden" [fretted] instrument, in bad condition', and her conclusions were thus drawn upon 'her own unskilled playing upon an unplayable instrument', as he wrote to the harpsichordist Violet Gordon-Woodhouse (1872–1948) a year later.¹⁸ But Landowska was determined, first, to demonstrate how Bach's music could not have been meant to be played that way or, by extension, on the piano (a 'perfected

Université Nouvelle de Bruxelles) and Geneva (15 and 17 December 1910, at the university). See Sonia Gonzalo Delgado, 'Programming Early Iberian Keyboard Music: From Wanda Landowska to Santiago Kastner' (Ph.D. dissertation, Universidad de Zaragoza, 2017), 62–109, 440–5.

¹⁵ Sonia Gonzalo Delgado, 'Entre las heroínas de Maeterlinck y las vírgenes de Burne-Jones', *Artígrama*, 27 (2012), 589–607 (pp. 600–7).

¹⁶ The Neue Bachgesellschaft founded the Bachfest, celebrated in different cities, in 1901, in order to propagate the less well-known works of J. S. Bach, thereby fulfilling one of the major statutory goals of the society. From 1904, the Bachfest issued the *Bach Jahrbuch*, the oldest scientific periodical dedicated to a single musician. See <<https://www.neue-bachgesellschaft.de/>>.

¹⁷ 'Damit unsere Erörterungen endlich einmal das Gebiet des Theoretischen verlassen, habe ich ein Silbermannsches Klavichord aus Bachs Zeit mitgebracht, das mir Herr Ecorcheville (Paris) liebenswürdigerweise geliehen hat.' [Wanda Landowska], 'Bericht über die Mitgliederversammlung der Neuen Bachgesellschaft', *Bach Jahrbuch*, 7 (1910), 171–88 (p. 181).

¹⁸ Letter from Arnold Dolmetsch to Violet Gordon-Woodhouse, Fontenay sous Bois, 31 December 1911, published in Jessica Douglas-Home, *Violet: The Life and Loves of Violet Gordon Woodhouse* (London: Harvill Press, 1996), 315. In this letter, Dolmetsch repeated his arguments in support of playing Bach's music on the clavichord and expressed his opinion with regard to Landowska's knowledge of the clavichord. I would like to thank Peter Bavington for alerting me to this reference. Clavichords could be fretted, with several notes played on each string, or unfretted, allowing one or two strings per note.

clavichord'),¹⁹ and secondly, to solve the dilemma 'harpsichord or piano' by posing the question, 'For which instrument did Bach write his keyboard works, for the harpsichord or for the clavichord?'²⁰

To further her argument, Landowska carried out a practical 'tournament' at the 'kleine' Eisenach Bach Festival in September 1911. She played some works by Bach on the harpsichord, after which the pianists Bruno Hinze-Reinhold (1877–1964) and Friz von Bose (1865–1945) repeated them on the piano. According to the *RMSIM*, she succeeded in converting the sceptics.²¹ The German press offered a more neutral judgment. Alfred Heuß wrote in the German journal of the International Musical Society that both harpsichord and clavichord were instruments used by Bach and noted that Landowska's success was due to the irrelevance of her opponents.²² Max Schneider stated in *Die Musik* that if audiences had the chance to hear and compare, nobody would reject the modern piano in favour of the harpsichord.²³ However, as Harry Haskell rightly stated years later, Landowska had successfully made her point: 'No longer could the harpsichord be regarded as a mere antiquarian curio.'²⁴ Not only was it established as an appropriate set dressing when early music was the subject, but its new sonority attracted avant-garde composers who helped to establish the instrument as a valid means of expression in its own right in the years to come.

¹⁹ 'Today's concert piano can also be regarded as a perfected clavichord' ('Der heutige Flügel kann also eher als ein vervollkommnetes Klavichord gelten'). [Landowska], 'Bericht über die Mitgliederversammlung der Neuen Bachgesellschaft', 182. She had previously stated that, 'We should refrain from [considering the piano] as a perfected harpsichord; plucked strings and struck strings are such different things. The piano is just a clavichord, improved if you will, with a slightly more powerful sound' ('Il faut se garder de [considérer le piano] comme un clavecin perfectionné – cordes pincées et cordes frappées sont choses trop différentes. Le pianoforte n'est qu'un clavicorde, amélioré si l'on veut, d'une sonorité un peu plus puissante'). Wanda Landowska, *Musique ancienne* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1909), 203.

²⁰ 'Ms Wanda Landowska takes the floor and states the following: Before answering the question "Harpsichord or piano, to play the works by Bach", it seems necessary to me to sort the problem that has already brought in many discussions, that is to say: for which instrument did Bach write his keyboard works, for the harpsichord or for the clavichord?' ('Frau Wanda Landowska ergreift das Wort und führt Folgendes aus: Bevor mir der Frage "Cembalo oder Pianoforte für Bachwerke" näher treten, erscheint es mir notwendig das Problem zu lösen, das schon manche Discussion mit sich gebracht hat, nämlich: für welches Instrument hat Bach seine Klavierwerte geschrieben, für das Clavecin oder für das Klavichord?') [Landowska], 'Bericht über die Mitgliederversammlung der Neuen Bachgesellschaft', 179.

²¹ 'This is the tournament of the harpsichord and the piano [...] She [Wanda Landowska] converted to the harpsichord those who had been among her most illustrious detractors' ('C'est le tournoi du clavecin et du piano [...] Elle [Wanda Landowska] a converti au clavecin, ceux qui avaient été parmi les plus illustres de ses détracteurs'). 'Eisenach', *RMSIM*, 15 October 1911, 80.

²² 'Man hätte allerdings der denkbar glänzenden Vertreterin des Cembalos, Frau Wanda Landowska, im Interesse des modernen Klaviers etwas rassingerere Vertreter dieses Instruments entgegentreten sehen mögen.' Alfred Heuß, 'Das Kleine Bachfest in Eisenach', *Zeitschrift der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft*, 13 (1911–12), 27–9 (p. 29).

²³ 'Dem verehrlichen Publico wurde nämlich Gelegenheit gegeben, alte und neue Instrumente zu hören und zu vergleichen [...] Kein Mensch wünscht, daß wir im Konzert unsere herrlichen Hammerklaviere dem Cembalo zuliebe abschaffen.' Max Schneider, 'Das Kleine Bachfest in Eisenach, 23–24 September 1911', *Die Musik*, 11 (1911), 113–16 (p. 114).

²⁴ Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1988; 2nd edn, New York: Dover, 1988), 52.

On 11 April 1911, Nin addressed a letter to his friend the Spanish violinist Joan Manén (1883–1971), with whom he had toured Germany and the Netherlands in 1909 and 1910. In it, Nin expressed his antipathy towards Landowska's interpretative approach:

I am outraged that the Orfeo [Català] has hired L... again, and she talks already about coming next year. Provincials to the end. The 'cage for flies' (as Gauthier-Villars describes the harpsichord) and the *tricks* from that pair of Jews conning them like the Chinese.²⁵

He then makes clear that his intention is to 'fight the vandalism' ('combatre el vandalisme'), to which end he is writing a book that will bury the harpsichord once and for all. These and many other scornful references to Landowska in the correspondence between Nin and Manén make it possible to assert that Nin was interested not only in debating an aesthetic and performance approach but also, and more importantly, in establishing a personal controversy based on anti-Semitic and misogynist prejudices and on his jealousy of Landowska's success, achieved through years of careful programming across Europe in a profitable association with the Maison Pleyel and the impresario Gabriel Astruc.²⁶ In July 1911, Nin began to compile documents to oppose the harpsichord affair, as 'it had done very well in disappearing once ... only snobbism could have resurrected it ... I do not say Judaism I do not know why, but this is it in the end'.²⁷ And, as he confessed to Manén in September, the two essays on the topic 'Clavecin ou piano?' that he added as footnotes to two of the articles compiled in his promotional brochure *Huit années d'action musicale*, released in October 1911 in Brussels,²⁸ were a clear provocation to Landowska, and were calculated to start a controversy.²⁹

²⁵ 'M'indigna que l'Orfeo haigi trovat manera de contractar de nou á la L... y qu'aquesta parli ja de tornarhi l'any que vé. Provincians al fi. La "gabía de moscas" (com diu del clavicimbal en Gauthier-Villars) y tota la *ruse* d'aquell parell de jueus els ha embaucat com xinos.' Typewritten letter from Joaquín Nin to Joan Manén, [Brussels], 11 April 1911. Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya (hereafter BC), Fons Joan Manén, M. 7077/93. Landowska had performed two concerts in January 1911 at the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona and was then invited to return in May 1912.

²⁶ Fauser, 'Creating Madame Landowska', 11–23; Martin Elste, 'From Landowska to Leonhardt, from Pleyel to Skowronek: Historizing the Harpsichord, from Stringed Organ to Mechanical Lute', *Early Music*, 42 (2014), 13–22 (pp. 16–17).

²⁷ 'Are m'estic documentant per lo llibre destinant a probar que lo clavecí feu molt bé de desporeixer una vegada ... y que sols lo snobisme l'ha pogut resucitar ... No dic judaisme no sé perquè, pero al fi y al cap no es mes qu'aixó.' Typewritten letter from Nin to Manén, [Brussels], 14 July 1911. BC, Fons Joan Manén, M. 7077/93.

²⁸ Nin added footnotes in *Huit années d'action musicale* (at pp. 24–5 and 55–6 respectively) to the article 'Les concerts J.-Joachim Nin' by F. V. and to another article by M. Daubresse (the Paris correspondent) published in *Le guide musical*, Brussels, 11–18 June 1911. The latter article challenged Nin's approach to the performance of early repertoires by questioning 'N'est-ce pas une erreur de jouer, au piano, toutes ces délicates pieces du XVIII^e siècle, si bien écrites pour le clavecin?'

²⁹ 'I will send you all this; you will see that taking advantage of the comments that I make to two critical reviews, I take my side on the "Clavecin ou piano?" affair ... At the same time, I am getting ready for the controversy that will come, for sure, and for the book with this title that I intend to write' ('Ja t'enviaré tot aixó; veurás qu'aprofitant los comentaris que faig a dos crítiques, prenc posició en la qüestió "Clavecin ou piano?" ... Y al mateix temps ja m'preparo per la polèmica que vindrà,

These two essays are indeed his statement of intent and a summary of the arguments he displayed in the forthcoming 'beating' of those '*wandals* who thought that *the faked resurrection of this infected cage of flies that we call the harpsichord* would be useful for the Art'.³⁰ At that time, October 1911, Nin was about to publish his book *Idées et commentaires*,³¹ and to tour southern France and Spain alongside the Spanish violinist Joaquín Blanco-Recio (1884–1913). This tour, on which he performed eighteenth-century repertoire on the piano, took place between January and March 1912 and involved his débuts at several Spanish philharmonic societies: Bilbao, Vitoria, Oviedo, Santander and Madrid.³² Nin thus devised the controversy, the arguments of which would inevitably connect his name with that of Landowska, in a desperate attempt to find a niche for himself among her followers. Nin's propaganda strategy, carefully wrapped as an aesthetic discussion supported on the authority of musical criticism, is not alien to the eyes of the contemporary reader familiar with twenty-first-century social media stirring.

Piano versus harpsichord: from Paris to Bilbao

In November 1911, Carlos Gortázar issued, under his pen name Ignazio Zubialde, an article entitled '¿Piano o clave?' in the *RM*.³³ He translated into Spanish Nin's first essay from *Huit années d'action musicale* and quoted fragments from Landowska's 'Bach et ses interprètes'.³⁴ Gortázar believed that the question at issue – 'Should the works of Johann Sebastian Bach and his contemporaries be played on the piano or on the harpsichord?' – was 'insoluble',³⁵ and that it positioned Landowska and Nin as the leaders of two different interpretative approaches.

Huit années d'action musicale and Gortázar's article mark the public opening round of the controversy between the pianist and the harpsichordist. As Nin himself admitted to Manén on 25 November 1911: 'The battle has started between W. C. and me on this matter.'³⁶ His several references to Landowska as 'vandal' and 'W.C.' represent not so much a play on her name as the fact that Nin regarded not just the harpsichord but the

segurament, y lo llibre que baix aquest titol penso escriure are, desseguida'). Typewritten letter from Nin to Manén, [Brussels], 26 September 1911. BC, Fons Joan Manén, M. 7077/93.

³⁰ 'Ja veuràs la pallissa que vos fotaré a tú y a tots els *wandals* que creyeu útil per l'Art la *resurrecció truquée de cette infecte cage à mouches que l'on appelle le clavecin*' (emphasis original). Letter from Nin to Eduardo López-Chávarri, Brussels, 29 October 1911. *Eduardo López-Chávarri Marco: Correspondencia*, ed. Rafael Díaz Gómez and Vicente Galbis López, 2 vols. (Valencia: Conselleria de Cultura, Educación y Ciencia, 1996), ii, 65.

³¹ Joaquín Nin, *Idées et commentaires* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1912). The *RM* published the Spanish translation of *Idées et commentaires* in 13 instalments between November 1911 and June 1913.

³² Gonzalo Delgado, '¿Un nuevo repertorio?', 180–2.

³³ I[gnazio] Z[ubialde], '¿Piano o clave?', *RM*, 3/11 (1911), 263–6.

³⁴ See above, n. 11.

³⁵ '¿Deben ejecutarse en el piano o en el clave las obras de Juan Sebastián Bach y sus contemporáneos? Problema insoluble.' Z[ubialde], '¿Piano o clave?', 263.

³⁶ 'A propòsit; la batalla a començat entre la W. C. y jo a ce sujet.' Typewritten letter from Nin to Manén, [Brussels], 25 November 1911. BC, Fons Joan Manén, M. 7077/93.

harpsichordist as the opponent to be eliminated. Nin maintained that several European journals – French, Belgian and Swiss – were ‘interested in the matter’,³⁷ but the controversy found a triple perspective only in the *RM*, the *RMSIM* and (from July 1912) the *RMC*.³⁸ Adding further fuel to the fire, he also signed in November 1911 an article entitled ‘À propos du Festival Bach à Eisenbach [*sic*]’, published in Paris in December 1911, attributing the success of Landowska’s harpsichord to its picturesque quality despite its lack of expression.³⁹ This article coincided with the aforementioned letter to Gordon-Woodhouse in which Dolmetsch questioned Landowska’s expertise on the subject of early music (see above, note 18).

The controversy took off following Nin’s ‘À propos du Festival Bach’ and reached its climax in July 1912. Landowska maintained, in a letter sent to Nin from Kharkov (Ukraine) on 22 February 1912, that ‘a controversy on the subject of the harpsichord is always excellent to support my cause’,⁴⁰ but in a reply to Nin published in March 1912 in the *RMSIM*, she complained that it was a bad moment to start a controversy since she was ‘touring and overworking’.⁴¹ Several retorts from one to the other, spiced with some more sour private correspondence, followed until they concluded their contributions in Paris in July 1912.⁴² Landowska took the opportunity to challenge Nin to a piano–harpsichord ‘match’ to prove the arguments that Nin was intending to compile in a book.

Simultaneously, from February 1912, Nin was in discussion with his friend Eduardo López-Chávarri in the *RM* following the latter’s support for Landowska in translating into Spanish some excerpts from her *Musique ancienne* in December 1911.⁴³ The

³⁷ ‘Els diaris francesos, belgas y suïssos s’interesan a la cosa.’ Typewritten letter from Nin to Manén, [Brussels], 25 November 1911. BC, Fons Joan Manén, M. 7077/93.

³⁸ ‘I have lots to do, as in addition to the disciples, I have a triple controversy to endure in the Revista Musical of Bilbao, in the S.I.M. of Paris and, now, in the Revista Musical Catalana’ (‘Jo tinc molt que fer are, car ab els deixebles, tinc una triple polèmica que sostenc en la Revista Musical de Bilbao, en lo S.I.M. de Paris y are en la Revista Musical Catalana’). Typewritten letter from Nin to Manén, [Brussels], 27 June 1912. BC, Fons Joan Manén, M. 7077/93.

³⁹ ‘The qualities for which the harpsichord was praised during this “match” were, as usual, colour, clarity, brilliance and lightness [...] The piano is perhaps less quaint [...], but, in addition to the clarity, brilliance and lightness that no one dares to question, it has an expressive capacity that the harpsichord entirely lacks’ (‘Les qualités reconnues au clavecin au cours de ce “match” ont été, comme toujours, la couleur, la netteté, le brillant et la légèreté [...] Certes, le piano est peut-être moins pittoresque [...] mais il a, outre une netteté, un brillant et une légèreté que personne n’ose lui contester, un pouvoir expressif qui fait totalement défaut au clavecin’). J. Joaquín Nin, ‘À propos du Festival Bach à Eisenbach [*sic*]’, *RMSIM*, 15 December 1911, 100–2 (p. 101).

⁴⁰ ‘Une polémique au sujet du clavecin est toujours une chose excellente pour la cause que je défends.’ Handwritten letter from Landowska to Nin, Kharkov, 22 February 1912. Washington DC, Library of Congress (hereafter LC), Wanda Landowska and Denise Restout Papers, ML31. L356, folder 80/1.

⁴¹ ‘Mon ami Joachim Nin a choisi un mauvais moment pour des discussions: je suis en voyage et surchargé de travail.’ Wanda Landowska, ‘Piano ou clavecin?’, *RMSIM*, 15 March 1912, 72.

⁴² Following the initial exchange of articles cited in nn. 39 and 41 above, the series in the *RMSIM* concerning this issue continued as follows: Nin, ‘Piano ou clavecin’, *RMSIM*, 15 May 1912, 75; Landowska, ‘Clavecin ou piano’, *RMSIM*, 15 June 1912, 76–7; Nin, ‘Piano ou clavecin?’, *RMSIM*, 15 July 1912, 90; Landowska, ‘Piano ou clavecin?’, *RMSIM*, 15 July 1912, 91.

⁴³ Following [Ignazio] Z[ubialde]’s article, which appeared in November 1911 under the title ‘¿Piano o clave?’ (see above, n. 33), Eduardo López-Chávarri translated into Spanish excerpts from

conclusion, 'We certainly *can* play Bach on the piano, but we *should* play it on the harpsichord,'⁴⁴ taken from 'Le clavecin chez Bach', was in clear opposition to Nin's approach. In visual terms, it was as if Landowska preferred 'to contemplate an eighteenth-century etching in its modest frame of the period rather than in the most splendid modern frame'.⁴⁵ In other words, eighteenth-century music should be played on a 'harpsichord-frame' in order to contextualize the repertoire. Whereas Nin, following his idea that 'music is above all an art of expression', 'put musical truth over historical truth by playing these works on a simple piano, that is to say, on the most expressive and perfect of all keyboard instruments', as he claimed in the programme notes for his concert in Brussels on 31 January 1912.⁴⁶ To Nin, the piano was 'an aesthetic successor to the clavichord and a historical successor to the harpsichord'.⁴⁷ Accordingly, Díaz Pérez de Alejo concludes in her analysis of the controversy that, whereas Nin based his approach 'on the idea that music is expressive in itself, taking advantage of the progress in instrument manufacturing, Landowska established a correspondence between repertoires and the historical instrument upon which they should be played, so that her interpretations correspond to the periods in which works were written'.⁴⁸

This last statement is not completely accurate, since Landowska benefited from the progress in piano manufacturing as applied to modern Pleyel harpsichords. And this was Nin's second argument against the harpsichord, and against Landowska too.⁴⁹ Nin pointed out that 'concert harpsichords are larger than concert grand pianos', especially

Landowska's 'Le clavecin chez Bach', *RMSIM*, 15 July 1910, 309–22, and the chapters 'Le clavecin' and 'Les transpositeurs' from *Musique ancienne*. The complete series of articles in the *RM* concerning this issue was as follows: Landowska (trans. López-Chávarri), '¿Piano o clave?', *RM*, 3/12 (1911), 293–8; Nin, '¿Piano o clave?', *RM*, 4/2 (1912), 29–34; López-Chávarri, 'Valencia', *RM*, 4/4 (1912), 98–9; Nin, '¿Piano o clave?', *RM*, 4/5 (1912), 117–18; López-Chávarri, 'Valencia', *RM*, 4/6 (1912), 155–6; Nin, '¿Piano o clave?', *RM*, 4/7 (1912), 171–4; López-Chávarri, 'Perdonad, Señor', *RM*, 4/8 (1912), 198–203; Nin, '¿Piano o clave? Perdónalo, Señor ...', *RM*, 4/9 (1912), 220–31; López-Chávarri, 'Decíamos ayer ...', *RM*, 4/10 (1912), 240–3.

⁴⁴ 'Es necesario tratar de obtener en el piano todos los efectos del "clavecín". Porque, en rigor, *se puede* tocar a Bach en el piano, pero *se debe* ejecutarlo en el "clavecín".' Landowska (trans. López-Chávarri), '¿Piano o clave?', 296.

⁴⁵ 'Car je préfère voir une gravure du XVIII^e siècle dans son modeste cadre de l'époque, que dans le plus somptueux encadrement moderne style.' Landowska, 'Piano ou clavecin?', *RMSIM*, 15 July 1912, 91.

⁴⁶ 'La musique étant avant tout un art d'expression, j'ai cru devoir mettre la vérité musicale au-dessus de la vérité historique en jouant ces œuvres sur un simple piano, c'est-à-dire, sur le plus expressif et le plus parfait de tous les instruments à cordes et à clavier.' Joaquín Nin, 'La musique de clavecin au piano', programme notes to 'La musique de clavier au XVIII^e siècle, en France, en Italie et en Allemagne', Salle de la Grande Harmonie, Brussels, 31 January 1912, p. [XII]. Granada, Archivo Manuel de Falla, NFE 1912-003.

⁴⁷ 'El piano, sucesor estético del clavicordio y sucesor histórico del clave, ha substituido, completándolos, estos dos instrumentos de transición.' Nin, '¿Piano o clave?', *RM*, 4/2 (1912), 34.

⁴⁸ 'Mientras Nin parte de que la música es expresiva en sí misma, ganando aún más si evoluciona el instrumento para interpretarla, Landowska establece una correspondencia entre los repertorios musicales y su adecuación al instrumento histórico, de manera que su interpretación responda a la época en que las obras fueron escritas.' Díaz Pérez de Alejo, 'El "duelo"', 233.

⁴⁹ In any case, the history of the revival has proved that one could achieve a historically informed performance when playing on the most modern of keyboard instruments and merely evoke the illusion of a distant musical past when playing on a harpsichord.

those of the Maison Pleyel.⁵⁰ Pleyel harpsichords were, indeed, a wonder of piano manufacture, as Jean-Claude Battault claimed when he compared Pleyel, Érard and Gaveau instruments,⁵¹ and as Martin Elste recently stated, ‘Their harpsichords combined nostalgia with mechanical progress.’⁵² Nin continued that it was the ‘new’ sonority of the harpsichord and not its pretended historicism that accounted for its success: ‘Only the curiosity attached to every new means of expression, to every unknown or unfamiliar sonorous subject, could thus make the current resurrection of the harpsichord seem attractive.’⁵³ Regardless of his real intention, Nin was something of a visionary. As Richard Taruskin judged in the 1980s, after several decades of revival, ‘The historical hardware has won its wide acceptance and above all its commercial viability precisely by virtue of its novelty, not its antiquity.’⁵⁴ And it all began with Landowska.

The issue ‘piano ou clavecin?’ was, by summer 1912, a ‘matter of taste’ and, as Écorcheville, echoing Gortázar, claimed, both ‘insoluble and badly formulated’.⁵⁵ It was at this point that Nin developed his propaganda strategy, disguised as an aesthetic discussion, into a vicious attack against the ‘snob’ Polish harpsichordist and all her flatterers.

Nin versus Landowska: Barcelona and the Pleyel prototypes

Nin’s extensive articles published in July 1912 in both the *RM* and the *RMC* are clearly fed by his antipathy towards Landowska.⁵⁶ They were, respectively, an attack on López-Chávarri in his role of Landowska’s ‘thurifer’⁵⁷ and a clear provocation of

⁵⁰ ‘Les grands clavecins dépassent souvent en longueur les plus grands pianos de concert. Ceux de la Maison Pleyel, du moins, mesurent deux centimètres de plus que le piano dont je me suis servi pour cette séance.’ Nin, *Huit années*, 55.

⁵¹ Battault exposes that whereas the firm Érard created some harpsichords that could be considered faithful copies of historical instruments, Pleyel created a kind of harpsichord that displayed all the advanced techniques in the manufacture of the modern piano. Jean-Claude Battault, ‘Les clavecins Pleyel, Érard et Gaveau, 1889–1970’, *Musique ancienne: Instruments et imagination / Music of the Past: Instruments and Imagination: Actes des rencontres internationales harmoniques, Lausanne 2004*, ed. Michael Latham (Berne and Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006), 193–211 (pp. 195–8).

⁵² Elste, ‘From Landowska to Leonhardt, from Pleyel to Skowronek’, 14.

⁵³ ‘Seule la curiosité qui s’attache à tout moyen expressif nouveau pour nous, à toute matière sonore inconnue ou peu-familiaire, pourrait donc rendre attrayante la résurrection momentanée du clavecin.’ Nin, *Huit années*, 25.

⁵⁴ Richard Taruskin, ‘The Pastness of the Present and the Presence of the Past’, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 90–154 (p. 102). This publication includes several articles on the topic that had first appeared in the previous decade.

⁵⁵ ‘Je ne crois pas mauvais d’entretenir une agitation musicologique autour de cette question, d’ailleurs insoluble et mal posée [...] C’est une affaire de goût.’ Typewritten letter from Jules Écorcheville to Wanda Landowska and Henri Lew, Viarmes (Seine et Oise), 4 June 1912. LC, Wanda Landowska and Denise Restout Papers, ML31. L356, folder 80/1.

⁵⁶ Nin, ‘¿Piano o clave?’, *RM*, 4/7 (1912), 171–4; Nin, ‘Clavicembal o piano?’, *RMC*, 102–3 (1912), 165–84. Landowska kept a copy of these two articles in the folder labelled ‘Contre le clavecin – Histoire Nin’ preserved in LC, Wanda Landowska and Denise Restout Papers, ML31. L356.

⁵⁷ ‘En Chávarri s’ha guanyat, a força de fer el turiferari landowskià, una pallissa formidable en la *Revista Musical* de Bilbao.’ Typewritten letter from Nin to Manén, Brussels, 9 July 1912. BC, Fons Joan Manén, M. 7077/93.

Landowska through the Orfeo Català's journal. Nin emphasized the idea that the harpsichord was condemned 'by the harpsichordists themselves'⁵⁸ and underlined that, 'Bach's praises for Silbermann's pianos in 1747 could be considered the greatest victory of the piano in all ages.'⁵⁹ These arguments, displayed among a handful of (sometimes distorted) historical quotations led to the conclusion that,

Those who, eager for new sensations, for fake *historical* reconstructions, for snobbism à *outrance*, reject the piano and accuse it of deforming Bach's ideal, ignore the fact that geniuses such as that inaccessible sovereign write neither for a period nor for an instrument: they write with their soul, for the soul and eternity [...] The voice of the harpsichord does not transcend our ears, because it is voice without soul.⁶⁰

In other words, the harpsichord was a superficial apparatus. This is indeed a well-founded aesthetic opinion: not only Landowska when playing Bach on the piano, but several performers or connoisseurs had to agree with the fact that Bach's and other eighteenth-century composers' music *could* be played on the piano, thus siding with the 'traditional' mode in performance – as defined by Hermann Danuser⁶¹ – and according, nonetheless, with historical evidence, as Nin himself pointed out. However, Nin's most controversial contribution was addressed specifically to the alleged authenticity of Landowska's so-called harpsichord, the Pleyel Grand Modèle de Concert, a few weeks after she premièred it at the Breslau Bach Festival in June 1912. This instrument was a technically improved Pleyel harpsichord which included a 16-foot stop operated by a seventh pedal.⁶²

Nin stated in the *RM* that, 'There is an abyss between the harpsichord that Ms Landowska plays and Bach's instrument because, in the latter, strings were plucked by quill plectra and in that [of Landowska] they are plucked by leather plectra, which completely modifies the sonority, removes a great part of its sharpness and provides it with apocryphal colour and timbre,' and moreover, 'Bach's harpsichord had *manual* registers' – hence, the pedal registers in Landowska's were anachronistic.⁶³ In reality,

⁵⁸ 'El clavicembal, doncs, havia sigut condemnat no pels pianists, sinó pels clavicembalistes mateixos' (Nin, 'Clavicembal o piano?', *RMC*, 102–3 (1912), 179); 'el clave, que por esas razones mismas fue condenado, no por mí ni por el vecino de enfrente, sino por los clavecinistas' (Nin, '¿Piano o clave?', *RM*, 4/7 (1912), 172).

⁵⁹ 'Els elogis que féu Bach, en 1747, dels pianos de Silbermann, poden considerar-se com el més gran triomf conquistat pel piano en totes les epoques.' Nin, 'Clavicembal o piano?', *RMC*, 102–3 (1912), 167.

⁶⁰ 'Els que, avids de sensacions noves, de reconstitucions dites, falsament, *historiques*, de snobisme à *outrance*, reneguen del piano i fins l'acusen de deformar l'idea de Bach, ignoren que genis com el d'aquell immarcessible sobirà no escriuen ni per a una epoca ni per a un instrument: escriuen amb l'ànima, per l'ànima i per l'eternitat humana [...] La veu del clavicembal no passa de les orelles, perquè es veu sense ànima.' *Ibid.*, 183.

⁶¹ Hermann Danuser described three modes of performance: traditional, actualizing and historical/reconstructive. See Danuser, 'Interpretación', trans. Alfonso Sebastián, José Julian Lavado and Juan José Carreras, *Revista de musicología*, 39 (2016), 19–46.

⁶² According to Elste, this was the unique feature of a few historical German harpsichords and also of the alleged 'Bach harpsichord'. Elste, 'From Landowska to Leonhardt, from Pleyel to Skowronek', 16.

⁶³ 'Entre el clave que toca la señora Landowska y el clave de Bach hay un abismo, puesto que en este las cuerdas estaban pulsadas por puntas de pluma, y en aquél lo están por puntas de cuero, lo que

as Battault remarked, during the early twentieth century, harpsichord manufacturers other than Pleyel (with the collaboration of Landowska) – Gaveau, for instance – incorporated leather plectra based on some late eighteenth-century French models.⁶⁴ It was the French harpsichord manufacturer Pascal Taskin (1723–93) who adapted, in the 1760s, a fourth-register *peau de buffle*. Kottick maintains that this register – the ‘quietest’ on the instrument because of its plucking deep into the string and because the plectra were wider and softer – allowed ‘small dynamic changes through finger velocity’ and was usually found together with a mechanism of knee levers or pommels to operate the registers.⁶⁵ Needless to say, Bach would not have used these prototypes, but Pleyel and other manufacturers took their inspiration from the restored 1769 Taskin prototype. Their harpsichords appeared as a marvel of piano manufacturing inserted into Watteau-inspired external cases. The ephemeral bird-quill plectra were replaced by thicker leather plectra that would last longer in these modern instruments, which were intended for use in a different environment: the public concert.⁶⁶

Nin’s second argument published in the *RMC* ran as follows:

I do not deny this spell, in the same way that I do not deny that of the pianola, because I have for a long time known that it is very easy to seduce the human ear with new impressions [...] It is, however, curious that, despite Ms Landowska’s *pro*-harpsichord propaganda, spread over the last 10 or 12 years [and] supported by the tireless generosity of the Maison Pleyel of Paris (who spare no expense on advertising), and despite her undeniable talent, the movement has caught on very little. The piano, on the other hand, has established itself in less than 50 years.⁶⁷

Nin persisted in the idea that the harpsichord success was a fad and focused his attack on Landowska as a mere commercial tool of Pleyel. As Elste recently wrote, ‘Hearing Wanda Landowska meant hearing a Pleyel harpsichord with two keyboards and a variety of different sounds,’ because she had entered into a contract with Gustave Lyon, then managing director of the Pleyel firm, according to which she would perform only

modifica completamente la sonoridad, le quita gran parte de su acidez y le da un color y timbre apócrifos [...] El clave de Bach, tenía registros *manuales* y que por lo tanto, no permitía el venerable clave ese, la voluble y mortificada registración que, anacrónicamente, emplea la señora Landowska en el suyo con registros ... pedestres!’ Nin, ‘¿Piano o clave?’, *RM*, 4/7 (1912), 172.

⁶⁴ Battault, ‘Les clavecins Pleyel, Érard et Gaveau’, 210.

⁶⁵ Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord*, 277–9.

⁶⁶ Kottick analyses the technical issues with the three first modern harpsichords by Tomasini, Érard and Pleyel, *ibid.*, 409–14. The Pleyel harpsichord used by Landowska from 1903 to 1912 until the arrival of the Grand Modèle de Concert displayed 2 × 8’, 1 × 4’ and the lute register (typical of English prototypes); leather plectra; keyboards of piano style in dimensions and coverings – especially noteworthy having in mind that Landowska played both the piano and the harpsichord in recitals; and a set of six pedals to control registers.

⁶⁷ ‘No nego aquest encís, com tampoc nego el del pianola, perquè sé, de llarga data, lo fàcil que es seduir, amb noves impressions, l’orella humana [...] Es curiós, no obstant, fer notar que, en deu o dotze anys que porta de propaganda *pro* clavicembal la Sra. Landowska, apoiada per l’inagotable generositat de la casa Pleyel, de Paris, que no repara en despeses quan de réclame s tracta, i pel seu indiscutible talent, el moviment s’ha estès poquíssim. El piano s’imposà, en canvi, en menys de cinquanta anys.’ Nin, ‘Clavicembal o piano?’, *RMC*, 102–3 (1912), 182 (emphasis original).

on a Pleyel harpsichord, loaned to her free of charge.⁶⁸ But Nin had also intended to champion early repertoires on the harpsichord, as Landowska pointed out in a letter addressed to Nin himself. It was only when Pleyel refused to provide him with a harpsichord and Steinway provided him with the instrument for his recitals that he became a harpsichord antagonist.⁶⁹

These two articles of July 1912 mark the turning point of the controversy. Well aware of Nin's interest in maintaining 'a controversy with me at any price [...] to promote himself at the expense of another's success',⁷⁰ as Landowska told her student and López-Chávarri's protégé, the Spanish pianist José Iturbi (1895–1980), she and her husband, Henri Lew, decided to break into the Spanish side of the controversy. Landowska never signed a contribution to the *RM*, but she published an article in the August–September 1912 issue of the *RMC* supported by two members of its editorial board.⁷¹ The correspondence between López-Chávarri and Lew, dated between August and September 1912, reveals a series of arguments that Lew provided and López-Chávarri published,⁷² these eventually leading to the termination of the latter's friendship with Nin.⁷³

With regard to refuting Nin's arguments about the harpsichord's lack of expression (a matter which exposed López-Chávarri's ignorance concerning technical aspects of the instrument), López-Chávarri was particularly interested in knowing whether or not it was possible to obtain crescendos and diminuendos on the harpsichord. Lew informed him that the harpsichord could obtain some dynamics either by 'sophistication in the touch' or by adding and decreasing the registers,⁷⁴ and, as expected, Nin responded:

⁶⁸ Elste, 'From Landowska to Leonhardt, from Pleyel to Skowroneck', 16. For an overview of Landowska and Pleyel's alliance for championing the harpsichord, see Jean-Claude Battault, 'Landowska–Pleyel: La diffusion du clavecin dans le monde', *Wanda Landowska et la renaissance*, ed. Eigeldinger, 141–54.

⁶⁹ 'Have you forgotten, my dear Nin, our conversation in Brussels? I am not the enemy of the harpsichord – you told me. On the contrary, I would myself like to play it, but Pleyel is intractable, whereas Steinway brings the hammers every time, even my concerts in Paris, etc' ('Auriez-vous oublié, mon cher Nin notre conversation à Brux? Je ne suis point l'ennemi du clav. – me disiez Vs. bien au contraire, je voudrais moi-même en jouer, mais Pleyel est intraitable, tandis que Steinway cargue à chaque coup des marteaux, aussi mes concerts à Paris, etc.'). Handwritten letter from Landowska to Nin, Kharkov, 22 February 1912. LC, Wanda Landowska and Denise Restout Papers, ML31. L356, folder 80/1. Nin's programmes from the 1900s and 1910s often feature Steinway pianos. See Gonzalo Delgado, 'Programming Early Iberian Keyboard Music', 439–51.

⁷⁰ 'Ese Señor lo que sucede es que quiere a toda costa tener una polémica conmigo y yo [...] no marchó con ese Señor; además tiene un modo de discutir que no es nada común y a la vez quiere hacerse renombre con la ayuda de los otros.' Quoted in a letter from José Iturbi to López-Chávarri, Paris, 28 August 1912. *Eduardo López-Chávarri Marco*, ed. Gómez and López, i, 280.

⁷¹ A. M., 'Clavicembal ... i piano', *RMC*, 104–5 (1912), 225–37; Wanda Landowska, 'Clavicembal o piano', *ibid.*, 237–9; Francesc Pujol, 'A cadascú lo seu: Pro clavicembal i piano', *ibid.*, 240–6. Pujol was at the time a member of the Orfeó Català and the chief editor of the *RMC*.

⁷² *Eduardo López-Chávarri Marco*, ed. Gómez and López, i, 324–32.

⁷³ The published correspondence between Nin and López-Chávarri shows an extended break between 1912 and 1927. *Ibid.*, ii, 68–70.

⁷⁴ 'On peu cependant obtenir sur lui des "Crescendo" soit par le raffinement du toucher, soit en augmentant et en diminuant des nombres de register.' Letter from Lew to López-Chávarri, L'Hautail, 13 August 1912. *Ibid.*, i, 324.

I indicated to him [López-Chávarri], through data, dates and arguments a thousand times proved, the historical, aesthetic and musical reasons that opposed the revival of the harpsichord as proposed by Ms Landowska and as sanctioned and even praised by Chávarri. It was preferable, especially with regard to [López-Chávarri's] honour, to assume that he either ignored or neglected the information I presented; if he knew or remembered it otherwise, it would be foolish to insist on the supposed advantages of the revival of the harpsichord as being the only instrument capable of providing us with a clear and exact impression of the sixteenth-, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century keyboard literature.⁷⁵

The 'to be continued' stamped at the end of the article and Nin's persistence in considering Landowska's harpsichord 'a mystification' made López-Chávarri suggest bringing the Pleyel engineer and director Lyon into the controversy. Lew, of course, considered this disproportionate,⁷⁶ and lectured him about historical harpsichords featuring either manual or pedal mechanisms to operate registers,⁷⁷ hoping for this to be published. Three days later, on 27 August, Lew confirmed that the instrument played by Landowska in Valencia in May 1912 was 'an exact copy of Silbermann's instruments':

With regard to the registers, it possesses two made of quill and two of leather [...] Ms Landowska has given a recital, in the Musical Instruments Museum in Berlin, in which she played successively on historical harpsichords, among them a prototype that belonged to Bach, and on her modern harpsichord, in order to prove the differences of sonority.⁷⁸

López-Chávarri did not mention any of these arguments in the October issue of the *RM*, but following Lew's indications, in a clear attempt to jeopardize the publication of the Spanish translation of *Idées et commentaires* in the same journal, he accused Nin of

⁷⁵ 'Indicábale con datos, fechas y argumentos mil veces comprobados, las razones históricas, estéticas y musicales que se oponían a la restauración del clave tal como realizaba la señora Landowska y que aprobaba y aún preconizaba Chávarri. Era preferible en su honor, sobre todo, suponer que él ignoraba o descuidaba datos que yo le exponía porque de saberlos, de recordarlos, era insensato insistir sobre las pretendidas ventajas de la restauración del clave como único instrumento capaz de darnos una idea clara exacta de la literatura para tecla y cuerda de los siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII.' Nin, '¿Piano o clave? Perdónalo, Señor ...', *RM*, 4/9 (1912), 221.

⁷⁶ 'Your idea of asking Pleyel for a reply has amused us greatly; but Nin would be quite proud to have stimulated such important controversies that a great company such as Pleyel should seek to defend itself and take him seriously' ('Votre idée de demander une réponse à Pleyel nous a beaucoup amusés; mais Nin en serait tout fier d'avoir excité des polémiques aussi importantes qu'une grande maison comme Pleyel cherche à se défendre et le prend au sérieux'). Letter from Lew to López-Chávarri, L'Hautail, 23 September 1912. *Eduardo López-Chávarri Marco*, ed. Gómez and López, i, 331.

⁷⁷ 'Old harpsichords were made with registers. These registers were operated either with manuals or with pedals' ('On faisait les clavecins anciens avec des registres, or ces registres s'obtenaient aussi bien avec des manuels que par des pédales'). Letter from Lew to López-Chávarri, L'Hautail, 24 August 1912. *Ibid.*, 326.

⁷⁸ 'Or l'instrument que nous avons à Valencia est une copie minutieusement exacte des instrumentants de Silbermann. Quant aux registres il en possède deux à la plume et deux au cuir [...] D'ailleurs dans une séance donné à Berlin dans le Musée des instruments anciens, Madame Landowska a donné une séance où elle joua successivement sur des clavecins anciens, entr'autre sur celui qui avait appartenu à Bach, et sur son clavecin moderne, pour démontrer la différence de sonorité.' Letter from Lew to López-Chávarri, L'Hautail, 27 August 1912. *Ibid.*, 328.

'arriving late', since he had published 'Anciens et modernes' after Landowska's 'Mépris pour les Anciens', and 'La raison du plus fort' after she had published 'Les transcriptions'.⁷⁹ López-Chávarri also quoted some lines from Nin's article published in *Le monde musical* in 1909 praising Landowska's performance. Nin had written:

Wanda Landowska made us hear, sometimes on the harpsichord, sometimes on the piano, music by Bull, Purcell, Chambonnières, Couperin, Rameau, Scarlatti, Pachelbel, Bach and Mozart finely, simply, with no boasting, with sonorities that affected but did not knock us out, with a very pure musicality [...] We should thank Wanda Landowska for not playing early music with the impertinent correctness that some scholars are still claiming, but with the fierce conviction of a very modern, very sensitive and very strong soul, which have found in those pages all the life our ancestors left in them, with all their expression and their nuances.⁸⁰

When López-Chávarri's article was released, Lew suggested to Lyon that he should not meet the request to take part in the controversy: 'It is not necessary that the Maison Pleyel take Joaquín Nin seriously and give him the honour of an answer [...] He is going to receive in the next issue of the *Revista catalana* of Barcelona a beating from Wanda that will keep him quiet for a while.'⁸¹ In her contribution to the Catalan journal, Landowska once more challenged Nin to compete with her in a practical match and persisted with the idea that Bach's works were not intended to be played on the clavichord. She referred to her demonstration in the 1910 Duisburg Bach Festival and to her article 'Für welches Instrument hat Bach sein "Wohltemperiertes Klavier" geschrieben?'⁸² to conclude that:

Clavichords in Johann Sebastian Bach's era were *gebunden*, that is to say, one string was assigned to two or three keys and was hit in two or three different places. It seems that Daniel Faber started building unfretted clavichords in the first half of the eighteenth

⁷⁹ 'Sí, llega tarde nuestro soliviantado pianista [...] antes de escribir él su "Anciens et modernes" ya tenía publicado Landowska el "Mépris pour les Anciens", y antes de conocer Nin "La raison du plus fort" ya había publicado la clavecinista "Les transcriptions".' Eduardo López-Chávarri, 'Decíamos ayer ...', *RM*, 4/10 (1912), 241. These titles correspond to different chapters of Nin's *Idées et commentaires* and Landowska's *Musique ancienne* (see above, nn. 31 and 19 respectively).

⁸⁰ 'Wanda Landowska nous a fait entendre, tantôt sur le clavecin, tantôt sur le piano, du Bull et du Purcell, du Chambonnières, du Couperin et du Rameau, du Scarlatti, du Pachelbel, du Bach et du Mozart, finement, simplement, sans fanfaronnade, avec des sonorités qui nous ont ému sans nous assommer, une musicalité très pure [...] Il faut savoir gré surtout à Wanda Landowska, de ne pas jouer la musique ancienne avec cette impertinente correction que quelques érudits s'entêtent à réclamer encore; mais avec la conviction ardente d'une âme très moderne, très sensible et très forte, qui a su retrouver dans ces pages toute la vie que nos ancêtres y ont laissée, avec toutes ses expressions et toutes ses nuances.' Joachim Nin, 'La musique à Berlin', *Le monde musical* (Paris, signed 15 March 1909), 89. Press clipping in the folder Contre le Clavecin – Histoire Nin. LC, Wanda Landowska and Denise Restout Papers, ML31. L356, folder 80/1.

⁸¹ 'Il ne faut pas que la maison PLEYEL prenne au sérieux Joachim Nin et lui fasse l'honneur d'une réponse [...] Il va recevoir dans le prochain numéro de la REVISTA CATALANA de Barcelone une raclée qui le fera taire pour longtemps.' Letter from Lew to Gustave Lyon, Berlin, 16 October 1912. Elste, *Die Dame mit dem Cembalo*, 73.

⁸² Wanda Landowska, 'Für welches Instrument hat Bach sein "Wohltemperiertes Klavier" geschrieben?', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 78 (18 May 1911), 308–10.

century, but they were very rare, and all unfretted clavichords found in collections date from the end of the eighteenth century.⁸³

Landowska's student Juana Barceló stated in 1969 that she 'carefully specified [to her students] which pieces belonged to each instrument',⁸⁴ which – considering that the inventory of Landowska's possessions made by the Nazis when they entered St Leu-la-Forêt in February 1941 listed three clavichords – may support her arguments.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, Dolmetsch and Ralph Kirkpatrick (1911–84) pointed out Landowska's biased 'opposition' to the clavichord, both of them referring to the controversial article 'Für welches Instrument hat Bach sein "Wohltemperiertes Klavier" geschrieben?' Dolmetsch, a clavichord and harpsichord maker, commented to Gordon-Woodhouse in 1911 that Landowska 'has written many articles in French and German, misquoting texts, giving out wild statements, drawing illogical conclusions with such apparent authority, persuasive eloquence and cleverness that many people believe it'.⁸⁶ It is also worth mentioning here the meeting between Landowska and Dolmetsch in 1927, when she visited Haslemere with some of her students. She addressed him as 'Le Maître' and expressed admiration of his instruments. Dolmetsch nonetheless refused to give her one of them, saying that she knew nothing about harpsichord playing.⁸⁷ In 1981, Kirkpatrick remembered:

On arriving in Paris in the autumn of 1931 to study with Landowska, I encountered an attitude towards the clavichord that ranged from considerable opposition on her part to total ignorance on the part of most of her students. She even made some attempt to counteract my leanings towards the clavichord by causing me to read a translation of her polemical article of 1911 'Für welches Instrument hat Bach sein "Wohltemperiertes Klavier" geschrieben?'⁸⁸

These facts clearly suggest how Landowska's many articles and writings in defence of the harpsichord responded not only to the dissemination of her aesthetic credo but also to the promotional campaign that she started in 1904, when entering the contract with Pleyel, to become the 'high priestess of the harpsichord'. Nin's claim that Landowska was the commercial face of the Maison Pleyel was not completely unfounded.

⁸³ 'Els Clavicords de l'epoca de Joan Sebastià eren encara Gebunden, es a dir, que una sola corda servia per a dugues o tres teclès i era atacada en dos o tres indrets diferents. Sembla que Daniel Faber començà ja a construir clavichords lliures durant la primera meitat del segle XVIII, però els seus instruments eren extraordinàriament rars, i tots el clavichords lliures existents en les col·leccions daten de la fi de la XVIII.' Landowska, 'Clavicembal o piano?', *RMC*, 104–5 (1912), 237.

⁸⁴ 'Multitud de obras, por su contexto mismo, exigen el clavicordio en vez del clavecín. Wanda Landowska especificaba cuidadosamente las que pertenecían a cada instrumento.' 'Entrevista a Juana Barceló', *Ritmo*, 396 (1969), 4.

⁸⁵ Willem de Vries, *Sonderstab Musik: Music Confiscations by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg under the Nazi Occupation of Western Europe* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), 219.

⁸⁶ Letter from Dolmetsch to Gordon-Woodhouse, Fontenay sous Bois, 31 December 1911. Douglas-Home, *Violet*, 315.

⁸⁷ Margaret Campbell, *Dolmetsch: The Man and his Work* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975), 166–7.

⁸⁸ Ralph Kirkpatrick, 'On Playing the Clavichord', *Early Music*, 9 (1981), 293–305 (p. 294).

Epilogue

To sum up, following a brief and direct debate between Nin and Landowska in the *RMSIM*, the controversy became a hot topic in the Spanish musical press. Landowska remarked in 1953 that she was aggressive because 'pianists [such as Nin] were against the harpsichord, probably against me too [...] They were against because [of] the idea of interpretation, and [because] the sound was so different from the piano, and they were enemies, immediately. And imagine how hard I had to fight with them.'⁸⁹ This undoubtedly refers to those years of the controversy in which she wrote articles profusely, published *Musique ancienne* and developed several propaganda strategies that would eventually market her as the unique artist able to perform Bach and his contemporaries in their *authentic* way – on the harpsichord. In 1913, her appointment as professor of harpsichord at the Königliche Hochschule in Berlin created the first generation of German harpsichordists, including names such as Alice Elhers (1887–1981) and Gertrud Wertheim (1890–?), and the movement spread through her teaching at the École de Musique Ancienne in St Leu-la-Forêt. But this inevitably created some competition too. Ruggero Gerlin (1899–1993) and Kirkpatrick were known worldwide in the 1930s. After meeting Landowska in Lisbon before she departed for the USA in late 1941, the musicologist and harpsichord and clavichord player Santiago Kastner (1908–92) wrote to her Spanish pupil Joan Gibert Camins (1890–1966):

She talks very well about you, but badly about all other harpsichordists. And many of them worked with her. I finally told Wanda: 'You must be a bad teacher and pedagogue because everybody who worked with you is a bad player.' She changed the subject [...] I would never play for her, so she cannot tell if I play well or badly. We discussed several topics on early music, but, sometimes, she claims things that do not harmonize with modern musicology and I cannot agree with Wanda's statement attributing all Bach's (keyboard) output to the harpsichord.⁹⁰

On his return from Havana in 1910, Nin had the same need of promotion as Landowska, and this accounts for his attempt to write a book in opposition to but at the same time benefiting from Landowska's success in playing the harpsichord. This idea came from a conversation with Evelina Pairamall (1870–?), a pupil of Heinrich Schenker, that took place in Vienna in November 1910 at a soirée in honour of Landowska. Pairamall addressed a long letter to López-Chávarri, dated Vienna 19 April

⁸⁹ Fragment from Landowska's television documentary recorded in 1953. *Uncommon Visionary: A Documentary on the Life and Art of Wanda Landowska* (1997), by Barbara Attie, Janet Goldwater and Diane Pontius (Video Artist International, 1997, DVD 4246), 20' 55"–21' 10".

⁹⁰ 'De Vd. habla muy bien, pero de todos los otros clavicembalistas habla mal. Y gran parte de ellos trabajaron con ella. Al final dije a Wanda: "Vd. debe de ser mala profesora y pedagoga porque de todo el mundo que trabajó con Vd. dice que toca mal". Ella se calló y encetó otro tema [...] además nunca tocaría delante de ella, así por lo menos no puede decir si toco mal o bien. Discutimos cosas de música antigua, pero ella dice a ratos cosas que con la moderna musicología no se pueden armonizar y no puedo estar de acuerdo con esa opinión de Wanda que quiere atribuir toda la obra de Bach (la de tecla) al clave.' Handwritten letter from Santiago Kastner to Joan Gibert Camins, Lisbon, 28 December 1941. BC, Fons Josep M. Mestres Quadreny, Carpeta 'Gibert Camins'.

1913, to apologize for the ‘acute controversy between you and Mr Nin on the topic Piano or Harpsichord’ in the *RM*.⁹¹ She describes how, having received some lessons with Landowska in Vienna and Munich, she met Nin and they engaged in a conversation about the harpsichord:

Mr Nin told me that he was about to write a book on this topic. He asked me, as he did not know the German language at all, to work with him – in an impartial way, of course! – and share my research, done (in order to save him time and money) on German books that contain information regarding the harpsichord.⁹²

The original handwritten letter was sent by López-Chávarri to Lew and Landowska. It is preserved, together with a set of three copies of a typewritten edited version (presumably made by Lew), in the folder entitled ‘Contre le clavecin – Histoire Nin’ in Landowska’s papers. The edited version of the letter is very relevant because some fragments included in the original were consciously deleted, including the following: ‘The more I advanced in this research that I had begun in order to enlighten myself about the harpsichord, the more I reached different results from those Ms. Landowska had obtained from her research on German sources.’⁹³ Nonetheless, the edited version retained the following: ‘I sent these comments, these arguments, with the translations to Mr Nin, who, in turn, has been very careful to have them verified, sometimes polished, by musicologists in Brussels.’⁹⁴ According to the correspondence between Lew and López-Chávarri, these three copies were intended to be sent to Écorcheville (at the *RMSIM*), to Pujol and Lliurat (at the *RMC*) and to Gortázar (at the *RM*),⁹⁵ although it seems that Lew did not in the end send them.⁹⁶ A year later, in early summer 1914, Nin confessed to Lew that he had launched the controversy in order to gain publicity but that it had also benefited Landowska, as Lew reported in a letter to López-Chávarri:

⁹¹ ‘Je viens de lire seulement maintenant la polémique aigüe qui s’était engagé entre vous et Mr Nin sur le thème du Piano ou Clavecin.’ Handwritten letter from Evelina Pairamall to López-Chávarri, Vienna, 19 April 1913. LC, Wanda Landowska and Denise Restout Papers, ML31. L356, box/folder 80/1.

⁹² ‘Mr Nin me dit qu’il se proposait d’écrire un livre sur ce sujet. Il me pria, ne connaissant pas du tout la langue allemande de vouloir travailler – sans parti pris, bien entendu! – avec lui et de lui communiquer mes recherches, faites dans les livres allemands de l’épargner et qui contiennent des faits relatifs au Clavecin.’ *Ibid.*

⁹³ ‘Or, plus j’avais dans ce travail que j’avais commencé uniquement dans le but de m’éclairer sur le Clavecin, plus je voyais que j’arrivais à des résultats tout à fait différentes de ceux que Mad. Landowska avait obtenus dans ses recherches sur le territoire des documents allemands.’ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ ‘Et j’envoyais ces commentaires, ces arguments avec les traduction[s] à Mr Nin, qui de son côté a eu la prudence très-louable de les faire vérifier, parfois styliser par des musicologues à Bruxelles.’ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ ‘Il faut cependant que nos amis Ecorcheville, Pujol, Lliurat [*sic*] et Gortazar sachent a quoi se tenir avec Nin et connaissent la valeur de ses recherches personnelles.’ Letter from Lew to López-Chávarri, undated. *Eduardo López-Chávarri Marco*, ed. Gómez and López, i, 335.

⁹⁶ ‘I told him [Nin] that I had some letters authored by her [Pairamall] which were not very favourable for him and that I could have published them, but we did not to avoid compromising him’ (‘Je lui ai raconté alors que je me trouvais en possession de quelques lettres de la belle lesquelles n’étaient pas très flatteuses à son égard et que j’aurai pu les faire publier, mais nous évitons cela pour ne pas le compromettre’). Letter from Lew to López-Chávarri, Paris, 10 June 1914. *Ibid.*, 334.

'I do not know German,' he [Nin] said, 'and I did not have enough money to provide myself with the necessary books, but she [Pairamall] took care of it. You should not blame me,' he said; 'it was publicity for both of us.' 'We do not need it, dear Sir,' I said. 'We always need publicity,' he replied to me, sneering.⁹⁷

At this point, there is no doubt that both performers made biased use of the sources at hand in order to support their own cause in a media stir triggered by Nin, and that the consequences lasted for decades. In 1965, Denise Restout added a note to the folder 'Contre le clavecin – Histoire Nin' which reads:

Myron Wood at his visit July 31, 65 told me that he was a friend of Joachim Nin's daughter Anaïs, a writer living in New York. Her father, who abandoned his family and was a terrible egocentric[,] towards the end of his life said to her that he regretted the feud he had with WL and would like to apologize but was too proud to do it.⁹⁸

Looking beyond the personal aspect of their confrontation, it has to be recognized that the Nin–Landowska controversy encouraged an unprecedented and renewed interest in early repertoires and instruments in the Spanish context. One immediate example is Joan Salvat's concert at the Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona on 21 December 1913. The programme featured pieces from Landowska's and Nin's repertoires, such as Rameau's *Le rappel des oiseaux* and a minuet from Bach's *Notenbüchlein für Anna Magdalena Bachin*, and Salvat performed it on a restored clavichord built in Barcelona in 1801 by Josephus Alsina.⁹⁹ In the pre-concert talk he asserted that,

The repeat visit of Ms Landowska, together with the controversy caused by Mr Nin's article in our *Revista* 102–103, has awoken the curiosity of many music-lovers interested in early music; they are seeking everywhere strange specimens that look like Landowska's harpsichord (despite the fact that we know now that this was a reproduction of models carefully preserved in foreign museums).¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ 'Je ne connais pas l'allemand dit-il et puis je n'avais pas assez d'argent pour me procurer les livres nécessaires et c'est elle qui s'en chargeait. Vous ne devez pas m'en vouloir dit-il, cela nous a fait de la réclame à tous les 2. – Nous n'en avons besoin cher Monsieur, lui-dis je. – On a toujours besoin de réclame me répondit-il avec un ricanement.' *Ibid.*, 334.

⁹⁸ Autograph note by Denise Restout, summer 1965. LC, Wanda Landowska and Denise Restout Papers, ML31. L356, folder 80/1.

⁹⁹ It has been impossible to identify the instrument, but Luisa Morales confirms the existence of the builder Josephus Alsina in Barcelona in the late eighteenth century. Luisa Morales, 'Constructores españoles de claves y clavicordios (1470–1832)', *Claves y pianos españoles: Interpretación y repertorio hasta 1830: Actas del I y II Symposium internacional 'Diego Fernández' de música de tecla española, Vera-Mojácar 2000–2001*, ed. Morales (Almería: Instituto de Estudios Almerienses – Diputación de Almería, 2003), 231–4 (p. 231).

¹⁰⁰ 'Doncs la repetida visita de Mme. Landowska, junt amb la polèmica motivada pel primer article del Sr. Nin, en el núm. 102–103 de la nostra REVISTA despertà també la curiositat de molts filarmònics enamorats de l'art antic, i aquí i allí se cercarem exemplars rars que se semblessin al clavecin de la Landowska (encara que aquest ja sabem que es una reproducció dels exemplars que curiosament se guarden en els museus de l'estranger).' Joan Salvat, 'Breus notícies sobres la restauració d'un clavicordi: Conferència llegida en l'audició de Música Antiga que en el propi instrument donà l'autor, el dia 21 del passat desembre, en el Palau de la Música Catalana', *RMC*, 121 (1914), 9–13 (p. 10).

The impact of the controversy was such that the correspondent in Brussels for the *RMC*, A. M., summarized in September 1912 that,

It is evident (and also understandable!) that we cannot go back to early art, to early music, without thinking, at the same time, about the instruments upon which that music was played [...] How could we not dream of [...] listening again, not only to early music, but also to early sonorities?¹⁰¹

Conclusion

The controversy between Nin and Landowska should therefore be regarded as a milestone in the revival of early music. It showcases a public confrontation between two performers who supported antagonistic performance approaches with regard to their organological choices for the same eighteenth-century keyboard repertoire, rooted in Bach and the French harpsichordists. Both employed a biased interpretation of historical sources in the media to champion their unique interpretative truth and to gain their audiences' support.

More than anything else, the controversy was a marketing strategy orchestrated by Nin in order to take advantage of Landowska's success by discrediting her favoured instrument, the harpsichord. However, the outcome of nearly a year of incendiary penmanship was quite the opposite: Landowska secured her position, while Nin was obliged to reformulate his agenda, championing from the late 1910s eighteenth-century Spanish keyboard literature in order to secure his niche in the growing early music market. This led to the publication of the first two anthologies of eighteenth-century Spanish keyboard music, the *Classiques espagnols du piano*.

In the end, the controversy represents two contemporary and valid interpretative proposals, both of which improved the understanding and appreciation of the music of the past and contributed to the further development of the early music revival in Spain and beyond. The arguments and concerns that sustained this feud still persist in the early music market, leading to a great variety of performance approaches, from the choice of instrument to the application of historically informed performative criteria. As has been argued, Landowska emerged as the winner, and the harpsichord was to become the standard instrument for the performance of early keyboard music by virtue of its exotic uniqueness and its ability to connect the present with a distant past. The harpsichord played an incontestable role in the various steps of the historically informed performance movement and, paradoxically, assumed the role Nin had once given to the piano: it became established as the instrument able to encompass all keyboard literature prior to the nineteenth century. Perhaps Landowska might in the end have thanked Nin for bringing this unexpected media interest to her cause and for engineering her elevation to the status of 'high priestess of the harpsichord'.

¹⁰¹ 'Es evident (I això ben comprensible!) que no ·s podia pas tornar a l'art antic, a la musica antiga, sense pensar, a l'ensem, en tots els instruments damunt dels quals s'executava [...] Com no somniar, si [...] en sentir novament, a l'ensem que la musica antiga, les sonoritats també antigues?' A. M., 'Clavicembal ... i piano', *RMC*, 104–5 (1912), 225.