

# The Musical Salon of the Countess of Proença-a-Velha in Lisbon: A Case of Patronage and Activism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

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*This article seeks to shed light on the musical activities sponsored in Lisbon by women of high society, and specifically on the organization of the concerts produced by the Countess of Proença-a-Velha (1864–1944) in Lisbon at the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Between 1899 and 1903, the Countess held nine musical soirées and matinées at her home, and organized the first season of the Sociedade Artística de Concertos de Canto (Artistic Singing Concerts Society), which she founded. She also composed and premiered about 30 vocal works with piano accompaniment. Although both the number of events and her catalogue are small in size, they form an important window on turn-of-the-century Portuguese culture. Her decisions to focus on the repertoire of lyrical music and feature performances mainly by women was in stark contrast to the deeply masculine nature of the musical organizations active in Lisbon during the period. This article also explores the ideological dimension of her activities. An examination of the vocal pieces performed at the countess' concerts shows that she intentionally explored four interrelated concepts of music: modern music, religious music, early music and Portuguese music. Some of her songs took part in the construction of what she considered to be a Portuguese national music inspired by Portuguese national poetry. The programmes the countess devised presented both a social and political dimension, proposing an elitist model for female socialization based upon the idea of the utility of cultural involvement and vindicating the role of tradition and, in particular, national tradition.*

It has been more than a century since the Countess of Proença-a-Velha (1864–1944) made her mark on musical life in Portugal.<sup>1</sup> Between 1899 and 1903 the Countess held nine musical soirées and matinées at her home and organized the first season of the Sociedade Artística de Concertos de Canto (Artistic Singing Concerts Society), which she founded. She also composed and premiered about 30 vocal pieces with piano accompaniment.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, she was forced to stop her musical activity when she fell ill.<sup>3</sup> A leading figure in Lisbon musical circles at the

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<sup>1</sup> Born Maria de Melo Furtado Caldeira Giraldes de Bourbon (b. 8 June 1864; d. 29 January 1944), she was Countess of Proença-a-Velha by her marriage to João Filipe Osório Menezes Pita, Count of Proença-a-Velha.

<sup>2</sup> Many of the songs composed by the Countess Proença-a-Velha are contained in two volumes: *Ecoss do passado* (Lisbon: n.p., 1904) and *Melodias portuguesas* (Lisbon: Lit. Alves, 1934).

<sup>3</sup> Most of the biographical information in this article, including the information about her illness, has been taken from contemporary newspapers, published memoirs of her

end of the nineteenth century, the Countess has been largely ignored in the musicological literature.<sup>4</sup>

Though not great in number, the events she organized are of historical importance. The role of women of high society in nineteenth-century patronage has recently begun to attract the interest of musicologists.<sup>5</sup> The countess's concerts were a social mission, founded on her belief that encouraging a general interest in the arts, could achieve 'social harmony' between the classes and the 'intellectual development' of all classes.<sup>6</sup> It involved the aspiration to participation, not only with words but also with music, in the public sphere – a kind of feminine access to politics also constructed in other countries.<sup>7</sup> Second, musicology has also had a renewal in interest in the history of programming practices, opening the focus to cultural practices and representational issues related to specific repertoires and organizational strategies.<sup>8</sup>

This article seeks to shed light on a time when the 'artistic pontificate' of the Countess of Proença-a-Velha was at its summit.<sup>9</sup> I have discussed contemporary critical reception of her concerts elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> Newspapers largely covered them and highlighted their novelty. I will describe here the organization of the concerts she produced during those years. Moreover, I will explore the ideological dimension of her activities, with particular attention to some of her songs, which

friends, and two of her own books: *Os nossos concertos: Impressões de arte* (Lisbon: n.p., 1902) and *Alguns séculos de música: impressões de arte* (Lisbon: Libânio da Silva, 1930).

<sup>4</sup> See Schaunard, 'Galeria dos nossos. Condessa de Proença-a-Velha', *A Arte Musical* 2 (31 January 1899): 16.

<sup>5</sup> For an introduction to the importance of these salons in Spanish musical life see Celsa Alonso, 'Los salones: un espacio musical para la España del siglo XIX', *Anuario Musical* 48 (1993): 165–206. For a summary of English language literature on salon music, see Yael Bitrán, 'Absolute Salon: A Look at the Literature on Domestic Music-Making in the Nineteenth Century', unpublished paper. I thank Yael Britán for sending me a copy of her paper. See also Myriam Chimènes, *Mécènes et musiciens: Du salon au concert à Paris sous la IIIe République* (Paris: Fayard, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> The Countess's mission belongs to a larger feminist context in the period. See Olga Morais Sarmento da Silveira, speech given at *Problema feminista*, a conference given at the Sala Portugal of the Sociedade de Geografia de Lisbon (Lisbon Geographical Society), on the night of 18 May 1906, marking the anniversary of The Hague Conventions (Lisbon: s. n., 1906). The author and the Countess were friends. On ideology used by the elites to invent a harmonious unity in which difference is erased, see Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), particularly the third chapter. On the idea of progress associated with the musical activities of the elite, see Jann Pasler, 'Paris: Conflicting Notions of Progress', in *The Late Romantic Era. From The Mid-19th Century to World-War I*, ed. Jim Samson (London: Macmillan, 1991): 389–416, and *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). See also Luís Miguel Santos, 'A ideologia do progresso no discurso de Ernesto Vieira e Júlio Neuparth (1880–1919)' (MA Thesis, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> See Nancy Fraser, 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy', *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56–80. This well-known article revises Jürgen Habermas's concept, arguing the plurality of stratified 'public spheres'.

<sup>8</sup> See William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> The expression 'artistic pontificate' is taken from Olga de Morais Sarmento, *Teófilo Braga: notas e comentários* (Lisbon: n.p., 1925): 10.

<sup>10</sup> See Teresa Cascudo, 'Paris en Lisboa: Ecos periodísticos de un salón musical de la Belle Époque', *Revista Temas & Matizes* 5, 10 (2006): 15–28. Available online: <http://e-revista.unioeste.br/index.php/temasmatizes/article/viewArticle/1486> (accessed 1 October 2014).

took part in the construction of what could be called a Portuguese national music.<sup>11</sup> I would like to emphasize that neither the events organized by musical dilettanti in Lisbon nor the common musical practices associated with them have been studied before.<sup>12</sup> In fact, this is the first published study that focuses on this kind of public musical concert – sponsored exclusively by music lovers and more specifically by women – in Portugal.

### The Countess of Proença-a-Velha, Amateur Producer

The Count and the Countess of Proença-a-Velha were part of a national elite who embraced a lifestyle that may be described as cosmopolitan, closely linked to other urban centres, particularly Paris.<sup>13</sup> Hers was a light soprano voice, and the press commented on her training in Paris under the private tutelage of Matilde Marchesi, as well as her friendship with the composer Jules Massenet, who, after they met in 1895, 'adored her golden voice'.<sup>14</sup> The countess's family had its roots in the Beira Baixa, a largely rural region in the interior of Portugal. Her maternal grandfather was the first Marquis of La Graciosa. Her father, the first Count of Foz de Arouce, was a congressman and governor of Coimbra. She was therefore a descendant of a noble family of ancient traditions, who had amassed considerable wealth mainly from provincial lands and purchased large properties in Lisbon in the eighteenth century. The family had a strong presence in the capital over the next century and thereby showed a tendency towards liberalism.<sup>15</sup>

Between 1899 and 1903, the Countess was one of the most active amateurs organizing concerts in Lisbon (see Table 1). Of the 40 private musical events mentioned in Lisbon periodicals during this time, nine were held at her home.<sup>16</sup> She also participated as a singer in soirées held in other salons. The amateur singer Sarah Motta Vieira Marques held 10 concerts at her home during those years, some of which were attended by professional musicians, including the cellist Pablo Casals, violinist Andrés Goñi and pianist Alexandre Rey Colaço, among others.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the Countess and Sarah Motta Vieira Marques never collaborated, even

<sup>11</sup> See Teresa Cascudo, 'A década da invenção de Portugal na música erudita (1890–1899)', *Revista Portuguesa de Musicologia* 10 (2000): 181–226.

<sup>12</sup> For a general panorama of the urban musical life in Portugal, see Maria José Artiaga, 'Continuity and Change in Three Decades of Portuguese Musical Life 1870–1900' (PhD diss., Royal Holloway, University of London, 2007) and João Luís Meireles Santos Leitão da Silva, 'Music, Theatre and the Nation: The Entertainment Market in Lisbon (1865–1908)' (PhD diss., University of Newcastle, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> The analogies between the activities of Countess Greffulhe and Countess Proença-a-Velha are astonishing. See Jann Pasler, 'Countess Greffulhe as Entrepreneur: Negotiating Class, Gender and Nation', in *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700–1914*, ed. William Weber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004): 221–47. I thank William Weber for this reference.

<sup>14</sup> See Schaunard, 'Galeria dos nossos', p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> The history of this family has not been written. I am very grateful to one of its descendants, Mr Diogo Tovar, for providing me relevant information regarding this subject. The best available introduction to the history of the period studied in this article is Rui Ramos, *A Segunda Fundação (1890–1926)*, vol. 6 of *História de Portugal*, ed. José Mattoso (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1994).

<sup>16</sup> My sources are the magazine *Arte Musical* and the newspapers *Novidades* and *Diário Ilustrado*.

<sup>17</sup> As far as I know, there is no available bibliography the musical activities of Sarah Motta Vieira Marques.

though they were often referred to together as distinctive musicians.<sup>18</sup> Besides the Countess of Proença-a-Velha and Sarah Motta Vieira Marques, there were three other women who were highly praised as musicians by the press: singers Countess of Almeida Araújo and Leonor Marques da Costa and pianist Elisa Baptista de Sousa Pedroso.<sup>19</sup> Artistic soirées were one of the most exclusive social meetings at the time. These gatherings were very demanding for the organizers as well as for the attendants. Only a minority were educated to be silent and focused enough to correctly appreciate them.<sup>20</sup>

The first big musical event organized by the Countess took place in April 1899, with Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*. Following the performance at her home, the piece was performed at the Conservatory of Lisbon during a benefit concert for Alberto Sarti, a professor of singing and composer who was active in Lisbon at this time. Sarti's professional career has not yet been studied in detail, and no additional information is available about the nature of their partnership. Some sections of Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* were sung again in June at the home of the Viscounts of Carnaxide. The Countess and Clara Sarti (Alberto Sarti's wife) were the soloists in every performance.

The Countess's second artistic matinée was devoted to Alexandre Georges's *Chansons de Miarka* and took place in December 1899. In May 1899, the same performers had presented the same programme at another concert for the benefit of Alberto Sarti. *A Arte Musical* reported then her unfulfilled desire to run a *séance-conférence* (sic) on Beethoven, introduced by one of 'our first orators'.<sup>21</sup>

It appears that the growing interest in her musical activities encouraged her to develop a more ambitious project, which resulted in the formation of the Sociedade Artística de Concertos de Canto in 1900. This was a private organization, and its objective, in the Countess's own words, was to promote vocal music amongst 'ladies from the most distinguished echelons of society, in order to present old or modern works of art to the public, and using income obtained from subscription fees to help poor artists'. The attendants, she continued, were to be 'carefully chosen among the elite, and all events and concerts were anticipated as artistic and elegant events'.<sup>22</sup> The feminist writer Olga de Morais Sarmiento recalled the presence of members of the nobility, diplomats and intellectuals.<sup>23</sup> Local newspapers also noted that the audience was predominantly female.<sup>24</sup> The new

<sup>18</sup> See, for instance, António de Lemos, *Notas d'arte* (Porto: Tipografia Universal, 1906).

<sup>19</sup> Afterwards, Elisa de Sousa Pedroso became a prominent figure. Among other activities, she founded in 1934 the very influential Círculo de Cultura Musical (Musical Culture Circle).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Maria Amália Vaz de Carvalho, *A arte de viver em sociedade* (Lisbon: António Maria Pereira, 1897).

<sup>21</sup> 'Concertos', *A Arte Musical* 8 (30 April 1899): 66. The *séance* was finally organized by the piano teacher and performer Rey Colaço at his home. The orator was António Arroio. The pianist 'publicly' performed it later at the Conservatory. See 'Concertos', *A Arte Musical* 9 (15 May 1899): 74.

<sup>22</sup> Condessa de Proença-a-Velha, *Os nossos concertos, Impressões de arte* (Lisbon: n.p., 1902): 45.

<sup>23</sup> See Olga Morais Sarmiento da Silveira, *Problema feminista* (Lisbon, n.p., 1906): 29–30, and *As minhas memórias (tempo passado, tempo amato ...)* (Lisbon: Portugália Editora, 1948).

<sup>24</sup> The newspapers *Novidades* and *Diário Ilustrado* included lists of the people of the 'high society' who attended the most important social events, including the concerts organized by the Countess. The nature of this social network and the family and social connections involved deserve further study.

**Table 1** Concerts held by the Countess of Proença-a-Velha (1899–1903)

Date	Concert	Programme
5 March 1899	Matinée de música moderna (‘Modern Music Matinée’)	Grieg: ‘Chanson de Solveig’; ‘Marche Héroïque’; ‘Le printemps, la rose’. Schumann: ‘Novelette’. Chopin-Viardot: ‘Aime-moi’ (mazurka). Chaminade: ‘Ronde d’amour’. Bachmann: ‘Chanson’. Chopin: ‘Nocturne’. Lacomme: ‘Un bal d’oiseaux’. Massenet: ‘Dans les sentiers’; ‘Parmi les roses’; ‘Gavotte’ ( <i>Manon</i> ).
29 April 1899	1ª matinée artística (1st Artistic Matinée)	Pergolesi: <i>Stabat Mater</i> .
17 December 1899	2ª matinée artística (2nd Artistic Matinée)	Alexandre Georges: <i>Chansons de Miarka: Scènes Tziganes</i> (Jean Richepin).
9 April 1900	1º Concerto da Sociedade Artística de Concertos de Canto ‘O oratório de Perosi’ (1st Concert of the Artistic Singing Concerts Society ‘Perosi Oratoire’)	Lorenzo Perosi: <i>La risurrezione di Lazzaro</i> .
27 May 1900	2º Concerto da Sociedade Artística de Concertos de Canto (2nd Concert of the Artistic Singing Concerts Society)	Pergolesi: <i>Stabat Mater</i> . Grieg: <i>À la porte du cloître</i> .
9 December 1900	3º concerto da Sociedade Artística de Concertos de Canto ‘Trechos clássicos’ (3rd Concert of the Artistic Singing Concerts Society ‘Classical fragments’)	J. S. Bach: ‘Credo’. Palestrina: ‘Adoremus’ ( <i>Misa Papa Marcello</i> ). Mozart: ‘Ave Verum’. Rossini: ‘Quando corpus’ ( <i>Stabat Mater</i> ). Pergolesi: ‘Fac ut ardeat cor meum’ ( <i>Stabat Mater</i> ). Schumann: <i>Andante und Variationen</i> , op. 46. Weber: <i>Aria (Der Freischütz)</i> . Chopin: <i>Andante spianato</i> ; ‘Polonaise’. Grieg: ‘Printemps’. Tosti: ‘Ave Maria’. Lacomme: <i>Czardas</i> . Traditional: ‘Canção da Figueira’. Rossini: ‘Tarantella’.
24 March 1901	4º concerto da Sociedade Artística de Concertos de Canto ‘Olaf Trygvason’ (4th Concert of the Artistic Singing Concerts Society ‘Olaf Trygvason’)	Handel: Fragment ( <i>Messiah</i> ). Mozart: ‘Lacrimosa’ ( <i>Requiem</i> ). Jommelli: ‘La calandrina’. Saint-Saëns: ‘Nuit persanne’. Chaminade: ‘Noël des marins’. Grieg: <i>Olav Trygvason</i> .

**Table 1** (Continued)

Date	Concert	Programme
28 December 1901	1 <sup>a</sup> Matinée musical 'Desenvolvimento da canção popular' (1st Musical Matinée 'Development of the Folk Song')	First part: Traditional: 'Ronde – Chanson de Mai' (Chanson Flamande); 'Canção do Figueiral'; 'Vira'; 'Canção da Figueira'; 'Canção de Coimbra'; 'La Pernelle' (Chanson anecdotique – Chant polonais). Second part: Adam de la Halle: 'Rondel'. Rontani: 'Canzonetta'. Caldara: 'Come raggio di sol'; Anonymous: 'Brunette – Chanson à danser'. Couperin: 'La Favorite'. Rameau: <i>L'impatience</i> (cantata, with viol and continuo). Third part: Luthero: 'Mélodie d'un choral'. Stradella: 'Aria di chiesa'. Bach: Prelude in E-flat major; Fugue in D-sharp minor; 'Aria' (Cantata n° 196). Haydn: Sonata n° 4 for piano and violin.
15 March 1902	2 <sup>a</sup> Matinée musical 'Desenvolvimento da forma da Ária' (2nd Musical Matinée 'Development of the aria form')	First part: 16th and 17th centuries: Falconieri: 'Villanella'. Peri: 'Aria'. Caccini: 'Madrigale'. Monteverdi: Unidentified piece. Cavalli: Aria ( <i>Il Giasone</i> ). Cesti: Aria ( <i>Orontea</i> ). Scarlatti: Unidentified aria. Second part: 18th century: Handel: Aria ( <i>Rinaldo</i> ). Pergolesi: Aria ( <i>La Serva Padrona</i> ). Jommelli: 'La calandrina' (arietta, <i>Il Parataio</i> ). Gluck: Aria ( <i>Orpheo</i> ). Third part: 18th and 19th centuries: Mozart: Aria ( <i>Il flauto magico</i> ). Weber: Aria ( <i>Der Freischütz</i> ). Berlioz: Aria ( <i>La damnation de Faust</i> ). Rossini: Aria ( <i>Il Barbiere di Siviglia</i> ). Wagner: Duet ( <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> ).
19 April 1902	3 <sup>a</sup> Matinée musical 'Música portuguesa popular e artística' (3rd Musical Matinée 'Portuguese Popular and Artistic Music')	First part: Folk song (choreographic, lyric and narrated songs) Traditional: 'O Vira'; 'O Trevo'; 'A Ciranda'; 'O Verde-gaio'; 'Caninha verde'; 'A Senhora da Póvoa'; 'Canção do sobreiro'; 'Um fado'; 'Zaz-traz'; 'Tontinegra'; Coro das Carvoeiras'. Second part: Marcos Portugal: <i>Lyras de Marília de Dirceu</i> (Gonzaga). Grivalde [Condessa de Proença-a-Velha]: 'As minhas asas' (Garrett). Third part: Salvini: 'O tronco'. Artur Napoleão: 'Gavote imperial' (pf). Alfredo Keil: 'Barcarola' (pf). Tomas Borba: 'Barcarola' (pf); 'Preghiera' (Antero de Quental).

7 June 1902	4 <sup>a</sup> Matinée musical 'Homenagem a Massenet' (4 <sup>rd</sup> Musical Matinée 'Homage to Massenet')	<p>Rey Colaço: 'Canção do Mondego' (pf). Ilídio Amado: 'Soneto'. Óscar da Silva: 'Cantiga'; 'A Moreninha'. José Vianna da Motta: 'Cantiga de Amor' (pf); 'Pastoral' (Au bord du Lac de Pena) (pf); 'Fado' (pf).</p> <p>Jules Massenet: 'Sonnet matinal: Que l'heure est donc brève'; 'Marine'; 'Élégie'; 'Nuit d'Espagne'; 'Fleuramyé: J'ai bu tout le printemps sur la fleur de ton rire'; 'Les enfants'; 'Air' (<i>Marie Magdeleine</i>); 'Chansons des bois d'Amarante'; 'Duo' (<i>Le Roi de Lahore</i>); 'Stances' (<i>Héroïade</i>); 'Gavotte' (<i>Manon</i>); 'Air' (<i>Le Cid</i>); 'Stances d'Ossian' (<i>Werther</i>); 'Air' (<i>Thais</i>); 'Printemps reviens' (<i>Cendrillon</i>); 'Duo des Anges' (<i>Le Jongleur de Notre-Dame</i>).</p>
23 January 1903	Matinée 'Arte Nacional' ('National Art' Matinée)	<p>Condessa de Proença-a-Velha: 'Serranilha' (D. Dinis); 'Vilancete' (Francisco de Sousa); 'Canção' (Cristóvão Falcão); 'Ária' (Francisco Rodrigues Lobo); 'Minuete' (Gonzaga); 'Melodia' (Garrett); 'Poema lírico' (João de Deus); 'Alma minha gentil' (Camões); 'À Virgem Santíssima' (Antero de Quental); 'A sesta' (Gonçalves Crespo); 'Canção do linho' (Afonso Lopes Vieira); 'Soneto' (Olga de Moraes Sarmento da Silveira); <i>As Ave Marias</i> (lyric scene, Teófilo Braga)</p>
13 June 1903	Matinée	<p>Condessa de Proença-a-Velha: <i>Auto do fim do dia</i> (António Correia de Oliveira); 'Oração ao pão' (Guerra Junqueiro); 'Atracção' (Eugénia de Castro); 'À morte de uma criança' (Bulhão Pato); 'No torneio' (Conde de Sabugosa); 'Exigências' (Cristóvão Aires); 'Absorta' (Sousa Monteiro); 'Sonetinho' (João de Câmara); 'À guitarra' (Manuel de Arriaga); 'Sereia' (Conde de Monsaraz); 'Alma minha gentil' (Camões), 'A vida' (João de Deus); 'A maior dor humana' (Castelo Branco).</p>

Note: The titles of works are as in the original programmes



nobility – including senior civil servants of the State and newspaper owners – were also represented through the family links to many of the ladies who frequented the concerts.

The Countess also assumed the role of singing teacher.<sup>25</sup> The society invited singing students from high society to join and practice their singing technique, and potentially to form a choral group. More established soloists, in turn, were also encouraged to engage with the younger talents and make use of the choral group as well. The function of art, particularly music, as a feminine and purely decorative pursuit was commonly accepted, but the desire to develop artistic skills in order to achieve other symbolic, professional, social or cultural objectives was not common practice at the time.<sup>26</sup> This desire to use art for social and potentially emancipatory purposes, through its integration in a discourse pronounced by a woman, was sometimes treated with a certain degree of sarcasm by the press. It was shocking, for instance, to hear a big ‘choral mass’ evoking sacred scenes and making serious music, but sung by a chorus of women – typically expected only to talk about trivial things.<sup>27</sup> The philanthropic objective, therefore, was in no way secondary, because it marked the boundaries between professional and non-professional activity, which meant that the initiative remained within the limits of what was socially acceptable for a Countess.<sup>28</sup>

Once the date for the first concert of the Artistic Singing Concerts Society had been decided, the Countess tried to ensure the attendance of the Royal Family, by requesting the mediation of the Duchess of Palmela, the Marchioness of Belas (the Countess’s cousin), the Countess of Figueiró, the Marquis of Pombal and the Count of Sabugosa (a regular at the Countess’s palace). Queen Amélia honoured the Society by attending the second concert, which was held in May 1900.<sup>29</sup> Three months after the fourth and final concert in the first subscription season, in June 1901, the *Diário Ilustrado* reported that the Queen had accepted the Honorary Presidency of the Society and that rehearsals had already begun in preparation of Massenet’s oratorio, *La terre promise*.<sup>30</sup> Also in June 1901, *A Arte Musical* announced that Alberto Sarti would be responsible for the musical direction and

<sup>25</sup> Her ‘disciples’ sang at her concerts, as reported in the newspapers. See, for instance, ‘A arte de música em Lisboa’, *Ocidente. Revista ilustrada* (30 June 1903): 1.

<sup>26</sup> See Joaquina Labajo, ‘El controvertido significado de la educación musical femenina’, in *Music and Women*, ed. Marisa Manchado (Madrid: Horas y Horas, 1998): 85–101. On the stir caused by the incorporation of women in professional composition during the same period, see the French example described by Annegret Fauser in ‘*La guerre en dentelles: Women and the Prix de Rome in French Cultural Politics*’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51 (1998): 83–129 or Katharine Ellis, ‘Female Pianists and Their Male Critics in Nineteenth-Century Paris’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50 (1997): 353–85.

<sup>27</sup> See ‘O concerto de ontem’, *A Tarde* (12 December 1901): 1. The comment refers to Massenet’s *La terre promise* programme.

<sup>28</sup> Virginia de Castro e Almeida, a feminist writer from an aristocratic family and regular at the countess’s salon, summarized the limited educational and intellectual expectations reserved for young upper class people in Portugal during the second half of the nineteenth century in *A mulher: história de mulher* (Lisbon: Livraria Clássica, 1913). For a contextualization of this dual social status as a musician and as a ‘lady of the world’ in Paris, see Myriam Chimènes, *Mécènes et musiciens*, particularly, the chapter ‘Cours de chant’, 273–88.

<sup>29</sup> Documents are compiled in *Os nossos concertos*.

<sup>30</sup> ‘High-Life’, *Diário Ilustrado*, 7 June 1901, p. 1.



that the organizing committee would be made up of other personalities, all of them close to the Countess and regulars at her salon.<sup>31</sup>

The transformation of the society into the Real Sociedade de Concertos de Canto, with the Queen as honorary president, was a notable social triumph for the Countess. However, she was unable to enjoy this success, as a serious illness forced her to suspend her social activities in Lisbon and travel to Switzerland for a period of convalescence. During this period, she was replaced as director of the society. In November 1901, the newspaper *O Século* published a short note on the resignation of the Countess and some of her collaborators.<sup>32</sup> No other newspaper reported the changes in the management of the society.

Shortly thereafter, a series of vocal concerts began, organized and conducted by Alberto Sarti, maintaining the same ideas set forth by the Countess and the Sociedade. The following months saw the presentations of Massenet's *La terre promise*, Perosi's *Stabat Mater* and Cécile Chaminade's *Les poèmes évangéliques*.<sup>33</sup> An announcement was even made regarding plans to stage Berlioz's *La damnation de Faust* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.<sup>34</sup> The Countess had been working on two recital programmes: the first comprised early Portuguese music played on period instruments and the second presented scenes of Act One of *Parsifal*, which she heard in Paris at the Colonne Concerts. Unfortunately, neither project ever saw the light of day.<sup>35</sup>

### Musical Programmes with a Purpose

The Countess wrote historical notes for her programmes, and some of the concerts were preceded by conferences. The purpose of these texts was to complement the musical experience through the addition of historical information, in order to offer a sort of taxonomic guide: dates, biographies of selected authors and lists of works.<sup>36</sup> These notes did more than discuss the works from an aesthetic point of view, implicitly referring to the actual performances and reviews. They also offered historical justification for the works' inclusion in the concerts. Such information had never before been provided before a concert, and we can see at work here an attempt to guide and educate the listener. The Countess was introducing a new method of appreciating music in Lisbon, as described in the following quotation:

The underlying purpose of organizing the concert was extremely original, just like the content of the concert itself. [The Countess] felt that the best way to organize a concert would be for the artistic event to be a *single* but externally *polymorphic* experience; this was an extremely appealing and new approach. It should develop a single thought; force all the pieces to respond to a dominant idea; establish, in society, the unity of feelings, the indivisibility of concept, with the aim of satisfying

<sup>31</sup> 'Sociedade Artística de Concertos de Canto', *A Arte Musical* 59 (15 June 1901).

<sup>32</sup> 'Sociedade Artística de Concertos de Canto', *O Século*, 8 November 1901, p. 1. The story was also reproduced in 'Noticiário', *A Arte Musical* 69 (15 November 1901): 219.

<sup>33</sup> See C. Stuart Torrie, 'Sociedade Artística de Canto', *Diário Ilustrado*, 11 December 1902, p. 3; 'High-Life', *Diário Ilustrado*, 22 March 1903, p. 1; 'Teatros. Notas', *Época*, 8 May 1903, 2.

<sup>34</sup> 'High-Life', *Diário Ilustrado*, 15 December 1902, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Os nossos concertos*, 128.

<sup>36</sup> See *Os nossos concertos*, preface, n.p.

intelligence and good taste in the same way: that was the Countess's objective that she achieved so brilliantly.<sup>37</sup>

These comments were published in connection with one of the Countess's first concerts, held at her palace in December 1899. Apparently, it was one of first times that a thematic concert had been staged in Lisbon preceded by a conference explaining the appropriateness of the selected works from a particular point of view. The Countess proposed a way of perceiving music by placing it in a historical context and transforming it into unique events of conceptual relevance. This model came from Paris, where she was acquainted with such programmes.<sup>38</sup> She even asked her friends to bring back information relating to the concerts they attended there. For instance, in one letter, she asked her friend, the Viscountess of Almeida Araújo, to keep all the programmes, because they would be 'very useful; as they always have a defined orientation, they suggest ideas that here you cannot get anywhere'.<sup>39</sup> In Paris, the search for unity in musical programmes was opposed to the model termed *concert-mayonnaise*, as it was termed in the an article in *A Arte Musical*, reprinted in 1903 and signed by Jean d'Udine.<sup>40</sup> For this critic, thematic unity was necessary for the sake of both general pedagogical impact also for the audience's emotional and intellectual experience.

An examination of the pieces performed at the Countess's concerts shows that the themes were carefully selected beforehand, corresponding to four interrelated musical categories: modern music, religious music, early music and Portuguese music. This is not a retrospective classification, but rather was an intentional programme, recognized as such and based on historical arguments, as shown by the names of the composers chosen by the Countess. For example, Jules Massenet, Edvard Grieg and the lesser-known Alexandre Georges – a fashionable composer in Paris at the time thanks to his theatrical pieces – were unanimously acknowledged as contemporary authors of 'modern' music. The music of Lorenzo Perosi, another fashionable composer at the time, was also performed in her concerts. His works dealt explicitly with the issue of integration between tradition and modernity in religious music. The performance of works by composers such as Monteverdi, Peri, Caccini and Pergolesi likewise transformed her salon into one of the most pioneering establishments in terms of the introduction of early music in Portugal, a trend that was then deemed quite modern. Finally, and this aspect was particularly unusual, was the combination of contemporary Portuguese music and composers in the arrangement of traditional music performed alongside new pieces by Tomás Borba, José Vianna da Motta, Óscar da Silva and the Countess herself, at a concert devoted to her own music, organized in April 1902.

The last concerts based on a single subject were devoted solely to the Countess's music. They were filled with her own songs based on poetry written by some of the attendants of her matinées. From the ideological point of view, the penultimate concert, entitled 'National Art', and held on 23 January 1903, was

<sup>37</sup> Mar. Mellus, 'Crónica musical. Um concerto-conferência', *Jornal do Comércio*, 19 December 1899, p. 2. Cristóvão Ayres, who attended some of the concerts, directed this newspaper. All translations are my own.

<sup>38</sup> See, for reference, Katherine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in *Os nossos concertos*, p. 123. The letter was written 6 September 1900, in the village of Penamacor, located in the region of Beira Baixa (Central Portugal).

<sup>40</sup> 'A organização dos concertos', *A Arte Musical* 107 (15 June 1903): 147–50.

particularly striking. She showed, both in the programme and in the music itself, that a historical approach to the music programming could be a viable tool for the development of nationalist ideas. She included in this concert a 'historical suite' formed by seven of her songs. They were inspired by poetry written between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, which the Countess set to music, creating a pastiche of what she considered the dominant musical styles in each century. In her words, it was the 'erudite construction' of some non-existent chapters in the history of Portuguese music. The ideas the Countess put into practice at this matinée are largely attributable to Teófilo Braga, an influential intellectual, university professor and politician who was a regular presence at her salon. Both were convinced that collaboration between poets and musicians would give rise to an age of 'vigorous renaissance' for Portuguese national culture.<sup>41</sup> For Braga, the foundation of a national literature was strongly correlated with the continuation of the 'popular' element in artistic creation. In his words, 'every great *opera prima* in Art, and the great geniuses that created them, were always inspired by national and human elements, whose theme was based on tradition'.<sup>42</sup> The decision to integrate the works of representative Portuguese poets set to contemporary music truly embodied their ideas, even if their experiment, as we will see afterwards, did result in somewhat nationalistic fantasies. Nevertheless, in Braga's opinion, the compositional project developed by the Countess in her songbook realized 'the most perfect and conscious initiative for revealing the Portuguese melody'.<sup>43</sup> For Braga, music had the power to complement and even enhance the words themselves. The harmonization of the rational and emotional content of words and music, respectively, were, in Braga's view, an important tool for social progress.<sup>44</sup>

It is quite possible that the Countess found a model for her historical songs in the contemporary editions of ancient music, namely the anthologies of *Arie Antiche* published by musicians and scholars like Jean Baptiste Weckerlin, Charles Malherbe, Alessandro Parisotti or Luigi Torchi. Margaret Murata has argued that by 1885 this repertory 'was well along in a process of "re-gentrification," from arias for professionals to solo-arias-as-songs'.<sup>45</sup> The two matinées that focused on the development of the folk song and aria, which took place in 1901 and 1902 respectively, showed the influence of that transformation and included pieces that probably came from those editions. For instance, these concerts featured one *rondel* by Adam de la Halle, likely 'Robins m'aime', published by Weckerlin, Jean-Philippe Rameau's *L'impatience*, published by Malherbe and Andrea Falconieri's 'Villanela', published by Torchi in 1895.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Condessa de Proença-a-Velha, 'A Arte Nacional', *Novidades*, 27 January 1903, p. 1. The text, written by the Countess was also reproduced in 'Música Portuguesa' in *Melodias Portuguesas*, X.

<sup>42</sup> Teófilo Braga, *História da poesia popular Portuguesa. As origens*, 3rd ed. (Lisbon: Manuel Gomes, 1902): XII.

<sup>43</sup> Teófilo Braga, *História da literatura Portuguesa (recapitulação): Os seiscentistas*, vol. VIII, 3rd ed. (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 2005): 37, n. 14.

<sup>44</sup> Regarding the positivist origin of Braga's ideas about music, see Paulo Ferreira de Castro, 'Quão musical é a República?', in *Pensar a República, 1910–2010*, ed. Ana Paiva Morais (Coimbra: Almedina, 2014): 197–226.

<sup>45</sup> Margaret Murata, 'Wo die Zitronen blühen: Re-Versions of Arie antiche', in *Historical Musicology: Sources, Methods Interpretations*, ed. Stephen A. Crist and Roberta Montemorra Marvin (Rochester, Rochester University Press: 2004): 332.

<sup>46</sup> Jean-Baptiste Weckerlin, ed., *Échos du temps passé* (Paris, Durand, n.d.); Charles Malherbe, ed., *J. P. Rameau: Oeuvres Complètes*, Tome III (Paris: Durand, 1897); Luigi Torchi, ed.,

It is also quite conceivable that the unidentified arias by Jacopo Peri, Francesco Cavalli or Claudio Monteverdi, among others, sung during those performances were extracted from Parisotti's anthology.<sup>47</sup>

### A National Tradition Felt Through Literary-Musical Images

The first part of the 'National Art' matinée was devoted to the historical suite formed by seven of the Countess's songs. These were inspired by poetry written between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries by Dom Diniz, King of Portugal, Francisco de Sousa, Cristóvão Falcão, Francisco Rodrigues Lobo, Tomás Antonio Gonzaga, Almeida Garret and João de Deus.<sup>48</sup> These songs showed that the choice of particular authors and poetry, taken from the Portuguese national literary canon, could be a way to unify the programme and its historical meaning. The recital started with the *serranilha*, 'Ai, flores do verde pino', one of the best-known *cantigas de amigo* by Dom Diniz. It is a poem written before the separation between the popular national element and the aristocratic and foreign element that, according to Teófilo Braga, divided Portuguese art into two irreconcilable paths. The *cantiga de amigo* was an aristocratic genre with popular roots, representing an essential, Arcadic and lost harmony praised by Braga and the Countess. In line with the Galician-Portuguese origins of the *cantiga* genre, the Countess introduced a rhythmic pattern in the accompaniment and in the vocal line in  $\frac{6}{8}$  that was usually connected to folk music arrangements. Musically, it shows the simplicity highlighted by Braga as the national feature revealing the typical primitivism of traditional music. The text is also a celebration of lyricism and *saudade*, a Portuguese term synonymous with nostalgia, which contained for contemporaries one of the 'essences' of the national soul. The *vilancete* 'Oh montes erguidos', written by Francisco de Sousa, is extracted from the *Cancioneiro Geral*, a collection of Portuguese lyrics published in 1516 by Garcia de Resende. The Countess selected French music from around 1500 as a model: she was familiar with Pauline Viardot's *Sis chansons du XVe siècle*, published in 1886. The poem keeps the theme of the *saudade*, transformed into music through a sort of primitive harmonic and rhythmic pattern. In addition, the song that represents the sixteenth century is a pastiche of an Italian *canzona*, with an accompaniment written in four parts, noting the role of Italian music in the international musical arena at the time. Cristóvão Falcão, author of the chosen *esparsa*, was a noble who practised an Arcadian-style poetry. It is worth noting that Dom Diniz, Francisco de Sousa and Cristóvão Falcão were men of the court inspired by the literary topic of 'Village Life'. They used elements contained in the archetype depicted by Luís de Camões, whose absence from this vocal suite emphasizes his status as an exceptional 'genius' in the history of Portuguese poetry. From another perspective, they all typify the combination of contemplation and action found in the intellectual model advocated by Almeida Garret, João de Deus and Teófilo Braga, all of them in the programme.

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Eleganti canzoni ed arie italiane del secolo XVII: Saggi antichi ed inediti della musica vocale italiana raccolti, annotati e trascritti per canto e pianoforte (Milan: Ricordi, [1894]).

<sup>47</sup> Alessandro Parisotti, ed., *Arie antiche*, 3 vols. (Milan: Ricordi, 1885–98).

<sup>48</sup> Regarding the authors and the literary questions brought up in this section, including the literary meaning of *saudade*, see Stephen Parkinson, Cláudia Pazos Alonso and T.F. Earle, eds., *A Companion to Portuguese Literature* (Rochester, NY: Tamesis, 2009). These seven songs were published in Condessa de Proença-a-Velha, *Melodias Portuguesas*. In this title, it is obvious the link with Weckerlin's *Échos du temps passé*, already cited.

## Ex. 1 'Ária', bars 1–12

**Larghetto**

O bem tar-dae fo - ge,  
O mal che-gae du - ra. Pa - ra queé ven tu - ra. Que não pas-sa deho - je.

On the other hand, as already mentioned, the Countess treated the chosen poetry musically in order to link it to what she considered to be the contemporary dominant musical styles. For instance, the seventeenth-century piece served as a tribute to 'classical arias', characteristic of composers such as Alessandro Scarlatti. It is a miniature *aria da capo* based on an *égloga* – also a literary tribute to the rural world – written by Francisco Rodrigues Lobo (Ex. 1). The eighteenth century is musically exemplified by a minuet setting of one of Tomás Antonio Gonzaga's 'lyres'. The collection from which it was taken, *Marília de Dirceu*, was published in Lisbon in 1792, and Teófilo Braga and the Countess considered it a direct connection to the *modinha* genre.<sup>49</sup> The Countess identified with the nineteenth century through the vocal virtuosity associated with Italian opera, a sign of the frivolous 'rococo' taste of the period.<sup>50</sup> The corresponding song is based on a poem by Almeida Garrett, 'Suspiro d'alma', arranged in eight-syllable verses (or *quadras*), which, coupled with their light lyricism, show that the poet took inspiration from the 'popular vein', evoked by the guitar-like accompaniment (Ex. 2). It is also evident that the Countess, as a means of characterizing every genre and, in consequence, every century, used different accompaniment textures.

Finally, the poem 'A Vida', by João de Deus – a contemporary and influential poet and pedagogue, stylistically associated with the neo-Camonian movement and republican politics – is a 'lyrical poem'. This is a modern genre inspired by lyrical drama, from which it retains a free and fluid form, vocal expression and the avoidance of strophic repetitions. The tone is quite pessimistic, focusing on the imminent threat of the arrival of death. In fact, the Countess's comment in the

<sup>49</sup> See Teófilo Braga, *História da Literatura Portuguesa, Os Arcades*, vol. 4 (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda e Secretaria Regional de Educação e Cultura, Região Autónoma dos Açores, 1984): 309–11 and Condessa de Proença-a-Velha, 'Terceira matinée musical', in *Os nossos concertos*, 176. Both of them thought that the *lyra* came from the *modinha*.

<sup>50</sup> The term 'rococo' is hers, see *Alguns séculos de musica*, 90.

## Ex. 2 'Suspiro d'alma', bars 13–24

[Allegretto]

Sus - pi - ro que nas - ce d'al - ma, Que à flor dos lá - bios mor - reu,  
Co - ra - ção queo não en - ten - de, Não n'ò que - ro pa - ra - meu.  
Ah! Ah!

*Apressando e espress.*

concert programme was that 'modern times were depressing'. This is reflected in the music, which was in F-sharp minor; the strong presence of a descending bass melodic motif may be associated with the well-known Massenet song, 'Élégie' (Ex. 3). Rodrigues Lobo, Gonzaga and Garrett were urban men, but they had not completely broken with their rural roots. In contrast, for the poetry of her contemporary, João de Deus, she composed a condensed lyrical drama. This song is the only one with no connection to the popular tradition.

Most newspapers reproduced the programme notes of the 1903 concert as written by the Countess. They put the emphasis on the novelty of her approach, which was aimed at creating a national songbook in Portuguese, treating each piece in an historical manner. She was also praised for reflecting the 'tonality' (in the visual meaning of the term) of every century in the music. Moreover, the Countess tried to create through her songs a 'tonality' of the Portuguese soul through 'simplicity' and 'sentimentalism'. She was eulogized above all for her intentions, and the analogy between the aims of the programme and its ideological fundamentals was described in the following terms: 'Like in an animatograph, this aristocratic lady has made us realize the lyrical and melodic evolution of Portuguese music from the sixteenth-century to the present day'.<sup>51</sup> The word 'evolution' was another way of saying tradition, in this case, 'visible' tradition or,

<sup>51</sup> 'Galeria Elegante e Desportiva', *Diário Ilustrado*, 14 June 1903, p. 1. An animatograph was an early film projector. The reference is presumably to newsreels.



## Ex. 3 'A vida', bars 1–12

**Largo**

*pp*

Foi se mepouco a pouco a-mor-te - cen - do. A luz que n'es-ta vi-da me gui - a - va.

*pp*

O-lhos fi-tos na qual a - té con - ta - va Ir os de-gráus do tú-mu-lo de - cen - do. -

*rall*

perhaps better said, 'audible' tradition, perceived during the concert. Illusion transcended the limits of the score: the songs were felt as images of an historical reality that never existed.

### Conclusion

This article has summarized the presence of the Countess of Proença-a-Velha in the Lisbon musical scene at the turn of the twentieth century. It has also shown to what extent her musical activities were quite exceptional in that context, even if she followed models coming from Paris. She proposed a form of musical activism that, despite being limited to the social correctness associated to her gender and class in her time, tried to give some kind of functional purpose to artistic practices. The Countess was the first Lisbon female amateur who managed to cross the boundaries of her own home, promoting external events before a larger audience that admitted journalists as well. Her concerts were unique events, supported by the prestige afforded by her social position. She tried to promote new social habits among Lisbon's high society through the models of socialization and the repertoire that she had discovered and enjoyed first-hand in Paris. Consequently, she proposed a similar model for female socialization based upon the idea of the utility of cultural involvement. Future research should link her project to later



Portuguese musical organizations where female involvement was an important aspect to consider.

Her rationale is clearly reflected in the events that she produced and supervised. Her decision to focus on the repertoire of lyrical music and feature performances mainly by women was in stark contrast to the eminently masculine nature of the musical organizations active in Lisbon during the same period. Her activities, enhanced by philanthropy and social brilliance, concealed a plan of ideological action that, at first sight, reveals a desire for affirmation on the part of the elite to which she, her family and her social circle belonged. The programmes the Countess devised for her private *matinées* and public concerts presented both a social and political dimension, vindicating the role of tradition – and, specifically, national tradition – as theorized by Teófilo Braga. The thoughtfully constructed concert programmes fostered the idea that society could progress artistically and intellectually through the initiatives of the upper classes.

The Countess was also praised for her own compositions, notwithstanding her limited skills, which place them in the context of an amateur practice. Future research should examine this repertoire, taking into account the rich information provided by newspapers regarding the social circle where they were performed for the first time. The historical suite described here was considered one of the first attempts to create a Portuguese national music utilizing a historical narrative. These songs, based on selected poetry from the past, were conceived, presented and received as a fantasy to be felt as an emotional illusion that could replace history. They were a sort of philological reverie that tried to efface any discontinuity between the past and the present, and minimize any discrepancy between the national soul and the cosmopolitan influences coming from Italy or France.

In short, Countess Proença-a-Velha's musical activities – concert organization, teaching and composition – were products of luxury and distinction, manifested in the selection and presentation of musical programmes that may be described as instruments of symbolic domination. As such, they should be taken into consideration not only by historians of music, but also by scholars interested in Portuguese cultural history.