



GRANADA, A “POETIC AND MUSICAL” CITY

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ABSTRACT

In a letter sent in 1926 to his friend Fernández Almagro, García Lorca described Granada as “poetic and musical”. This is the idea behind the research project “Music, Poetry, and the City in Contemporary Granada”, carried out at the University of Granada with funding from the Regional Government of Andalusia. The project’s approach and findings form the core of this article. It is worth noting that over the last two decades, the urban perspective has begun to emerge in Spain as a well-established trend in music research. These studies propose an analysis of the city as a whole and the cultural-creative, social, and economic interactions that occur within it. Specifically, music is presented as an effective means of organising space, providing meaning, defining identities, and even creating temporal frameworks, thereby exploring the social dimension of sound art.

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1. Introduction

In October 1926, Federico García Lorca wrote a letter to his friend Melchor Fernández Almagro in which he observed that “Granada is definitely not picturesque, not even for an Impressionist. It is no more picturesque than a river is architectural. Everything flows, plays, and slips away. Poetic and musical. A city of fugues without a skeleton. Structured melancholy” (García, 1997, p. 385). A few years later, in 1933, Lorca delivered a lecture in Buenos Aires entitled *How a City Sings from November to November*, in which he stated:

Granada is made for music because it is an enclosed city, a city set among mountain ranges where melody is returned and retained by walls and rocks. Music belongs to inland cities. Seville, Málaga and Cádiz escape through their ports, whereas Granada has no outlet other than its lofty natural harbour of stars. It is self-contained, suited to rhythm and echo, the very marrow of music. (García, 2010/1933, p. 43).

Lorca further emphasised in the same lecture that “Granada’s highest form of expression is not poetry but music [...]. Granada reaches its culmination in its orchestra of fountains filled with Andalusian sorrow, and in the vihuelist Narváez, as well as in Falla and Debussy” (García, 2010/1933, p. 43). It is precisely this idea that underpins the research project presented here: to explore, through a series of essential and sufficiently illustrative focal points, the interrelationships between poetry, music, and the city in contemporary Granada.

Although much has been written about Granada and its poets, the relationship between poetry and the city has not been systematically investigated, and the evidence available to date remains fragmentary, heterogeneous, and dispersed. Even scarcer are rigorous studies of the various musical phenomena that intersect with poetry and the city of Granada in the contemporary period, studies that would make it possible to chart an intermedial map of encounters of extraordinary diversity and cultural significance. For this reason, there is a clear need to examine these relationships within a multidisciplinary project that also has cross-cutting applications, generating innovative knowledge at the forefront of research whose results may be of value to sectors such as culture, education, tourism, and leisure. In doing so, the project contributes to one of the fundamental principles of the Andalusian Plan for Research, Development and Innovation 2020: social commitment and the transfer of scientific advances and results to society, thereby fostering social cohesion across the region.

2. Objectives

The project *Music, Poetry and the City in Contemporary Granada* seeks to achieve a number of objectives, both general and specific, which are outlined below.

2.1. General Objectives

The research project pursues five overarching objectives:

- a. To promote and enhance the value of Andalusian cultural heritage through the study of outstanding musical and poetic manifestations.
- b. To strengthen academic engagement with artistic intermediality, particularly the relationship between poetry and music.
- c. To demonstrate the role of the humanities and the arts more broadly in the construction of Andalusian cultural identity.
- d. To encourage interdisciplinary research between the fields of musicology and poetry studies, overcoming the fragmentation of knowledge.
- e. To ensure that the cutting-edge knowledge generated through this project has a practical and social dimension by disseminating its heritage value for the benefit of the cultural, educational, tourism, and leisure sectors.

2.2. Specific Objectives

The research project pursues six specific objectives:

- a. To analyse the interrelationships between poetry and music in Granada, as well as the city’s own construction of identity through artistic intermediality.
- b. To examine poetic-musical encounters within Granada’s cultural fabric, from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to the present day, as forms of human, artistic, and civic interaction that transform urban space into a site of political expression, belief, and the promotion of values.
- c. To identify locations within the city that have served as catalysts for musical and poetic activity.
- d. To analyse the artistic synergies among composers, poets, and performers whose work has been shaped by, or inspired by, the city of Granada.
- e. To identify and bring greater visibility to poetic-musical works that remain forgotten or largely unknown in Granada.
- f. To highlight Granada’s poetic-musical spaces, the artistic encounters and convergences that have taken place within them, and the individuals responsible for them, while developing tools for heritage dissemination that generate cultural, social, and economic value for the city.

3. Methodology

To study the intersections between poetry, music, and the city in contemporary Granada, this research adopts a methodology grounded in intermediality (Dayan, 2016) and microhistory. Intermediality enables us to address heterogeneity by bringing together different systems of communication and representation as interconnected sensory and aesthetic experiences. Attention is directed towards the immanence of events within processes of exchange, coexistence, and interaction. Microhistory, for its part, seeks greater complexity and avoids excessive generalisation in the interpretation of historical processes. It emphasises the exhaustive analysis of sources, the expansion of focal points of study (or individual research subjects) and their networks of relationships, as well as a shift in the field of observation. The aim is not to produce a local history as a route to understanding global processes, but rather to bring the perspective of macrohistorical processes into dialogue with the methodology of microhistory in order to achieve a richer and more innovative approach to the objects of study.

Using a descriptive method, an extensive review was conducted of historical documentation (both primary and secondary sources) drawn from the holdings of libraries, newspaper archives, and public and private archives. Documentary analysis of these materials has made it possible to reconstruct the interrelations between music and poetry in contemporary Granada, as well as the formation of the city’s identity through artistic creation. Indeed, the study adopts a broad concept of the city, within which poetic-musical encounters develop as part of a wider cultural fabric, encompassing cultural, social, and aesthetic spaces of exchange and debate. Likewise, these interactions have been analysed from the perspectives of creation, performance, and reception. Attention has also been paid to the study of the creators themselves (poets and musicians) and the historical and aesthetic coordinates that shaped their work.

4. Music within Poetry

Granada was a destination for many important Romantic travellers who, captivated by its history and beauty, portrayed the city’s customs, corners, and legends in their works, thereby shaping a distinctive poetics of Granada imbued with a deliberate Orientalist character. The city is itself a poem, as the Romantic poet José Zorrilla expressed in *Los gnomos de la Alhambra* (1886) (a work later set to music by Ruperto Chapí), which contributed to his being crowned Spain’s national poet at the Palace of Charles V in 1889.

Since the nineteenth century, Granada has been home to a remarkable constellation of poets whose lyrical works engage in dialogue with sound and music within the urban context. Whether as subject matter or as a formal element, music and sound appear throughout their verse as a means of understanding and describing the world. Although Federico García Lorca occupies a central position among these poets within the Generation of '27, the flourishing of writers from the early decades of the second half of the twentieth century onwards should not be overlooked. This includes figures such as Juan Gutiérrez Padial and Rafael Guillén, associated with the *Versos al Aire Libre* movement (Grupo, 1957), as well as Antonio Carvajal and Antonio Jiménez Millán, whose texts have also been set to music.

In the early 1980s, Granada witnessed the emergence of a poetic movement of considerable significance, even at the national level, known as *La otra sentimentalidad* (*The Other Sentimentality*). Seeking to develop a form of poetry attuned to the spirit of the Transition period, the movement was led primarily by Luis García Montero, Javier Egea, and Álvaro Salvador, under the theoretical guidance of Juan Carlos Rodríguez, a professor at the University of Granada (Egea, Salvador & García, 1983). This poetic proposal incorporated musical forms into the composition of poems (such as sonatas and requiems), employed popular song as a correlative of remembered experience, and encouraged frequent exchanges between musicians and poets, transforming poems into songs and songs into poems. Within the youthful atmosphere of the late 1970s and early 1980s, music became closely linked to writing, acting as a stimulus that animated poetic creation. Rebellion, long hair, and guitars symbolised the efforts of a generation of young people who shared projects, affinities, and aspirations to create a city different from that of their predecessors.

Women have also played a decisive role in contemporary Granadan poetry (Correa, 2002). In the nineteenth century, poets such as Rogelia León, Enriqueta Lozano, and Eduarda Moreno followed a Romantic tradition. Later, between the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, figures such as Emilia Serrano, Josefa Bueno, Rosa Bertuchi (also a pianist), and Cándida López (Violante) incorporated both explicit and symbolic musical references into their work. During the second half of the twentieth century, authors including Elena Martín-Vivaldi (who was also a member of the *Versos al Aire Libre* group), Mariluz Escribano, and Rosaura Álvarez developed a poetic language rich in sonic elements; the works of the latter two have likewise been set to music. Equally significant is the use of musical structures and song as reflections of lived experience in the poetry of Ángeles Mora (1952), who was also associated with *La otra sentimentalidad*, as well as Teresa Gómez and Trinidad Gan. They were soon joined by Marga Blanco, Erika Martínez, and Olalla Castro, whose work experiments with poetic rhythm, soundscape, and the lyrical voice.

5. Music Based on Poetry

By the end of the eighteenth century, Granada continued to find in music one of the most significant expressions of its cultural and creative life. Within the ecclesiastical sphere, the three principal centres of musical activity and composition were the Cathedral, the Royal Chapel, and the Collegiate Church of El Salvador. In these institutions, the relationship between poetry and music was developed primarily through *villancicos*, that is, vernacular works in Spanish which traditionally replaced the responsories of the canonical hour of Matins during the principal feasts of the liturgical calendar, especially Christmas and Corpus Christi (Capdepón, 1993, p. 35). Furthermore, the term *villancico*, particularly in the second half of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, should be understood as a generic label rather than a formal structure, since it encompassed forms such as the aria, the *cantada*, and the *villancico* itself (Marín, 2002, pp. 224–225).

This was precisely the case with the works performed in Granada's major ecclesiastical centres. As elsewhere in Spain, these compositions were written each year by the chapel master of the respective institution and performed before large congregations of worshippers, who greatly enjoyed listening to them and effectively transformed churches

into genuine concert venues. Indeed, ecclesiastical authorities often appointed commissioners to review in advance the poetic texts used in *villancicos*, as they occasionally contained elements that could be considered inappropriate according to the moral standards and censorship of the period. While the composers of the music for these *villancicos* are known, the authors of their poetic texts generally remain unidentified, since such texts were regarded as a secondary form of creation. This is evident, for example, in the fact that none of the 167 vernacular works composed by Antonio Caballero, chapel master of Granada’s Royal Chapel between 1757 and 1822, records the author of its poetic text (Ortiz, 2002, p. 66).

The situation differs in the case of later works, both sacred and secular, composed in Granada by musicians associated with the Cathedral and based on poetic texts. Examples include the compositions of the chapel master Valentín Ruiz-Aznar, who set poems by José Fernández Crespo, Juan Gutiérrez Padial, Juan Ramón Jiménez, and Luis de Góngora (García, 2001, pp. 219–257), as well as those of the organist Juan Alfonso García, who composed works based on texts by St John of the Cross, Miguel de Unamuno, Jorge Guillén, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Antonio Machado, Luis Rosales, Gerardo Diego, Elena Martín Vivaldi, and Antonio Carvajal (García, 1997).

Regarding secular music, it should be noted that it flourished in nineteenth-century Granada, as the city’s image in the imagination of poets, painters, musicians, and travellers made it an ideal setting for artistic creation. In this context, tradition and Romanticism converged in poetically inspired compositions such as those by Mariano Vázquez and Antonio de la Cruz (Barberá, 2020, pp. 57–62 and 127–132).

Since the late nineteenth century, Granada’s musical life has been studied through phenomena such as the Alhambra Concerts, which eventually gave rise to the International Festival of Music and Dance (Barberá, 1999, 2023), and through major figures such as Manuel de Falla, Francisco Alonso, Ángel Barrios, and Federico García Lorca, all of whom fostered intense poetic and musical connections across a variety of settings throughout the city. Special mention should be made of the *Concurso de Cante Jondo* of 1922, conceived by Falla and García Lorca, among others, and held at the Alhambra. The event elevated popular music to an unprecedented artistic status in Spain (Ossa, 2014, pp. 211–234). Later, composers such as the aforementioned Juan Alfonso García and José García Román developed new ways of combining poetry and music.

During the second half of the twentieth century, poetic-musical intermediality acquired a broad cultural dimension through movements that permeated Granada’s social life. In 1967, Juan de Loxa founded the radio programme *Poesía 70*, in which the recitation of poetry was interwoven with a diverse musical repertoire ranging from French chanson singer-songwriters to their Latin American counterparts, as well as Spanish protest song represented by artists such as Paco Ibáñez, Raimon, and Chicho Sánchez Ferlosio. In 1968, Loxa also launched a magazine bearing the same title as the programme, to which poet-musicians such as Luis Eduardo Aute (1943–2020), Joaquín Sabina, and Carlos Cano also contributed (Guzmán-Simón, 2010). At the same time, Loxa promoted *Manifiesto Canción del Sur*, an Andalusian protest-song movement founded in 1968 by Loxa, Cano, and Antonio Mata, which was later joined by figures including Ángel Luis Luque, Enrique Moratalla, and Esteban Valdivieso (González, 2004).

From the 1990s onwards, the use of poetry within Granada’s musical scene expanded into other genres and, consequently, reached new audiences across the city. Notable examples include groups such as Lagartija Nick (particularly through their collaboration with Enrique Morente on the album *Omega*) (Barrera, 2014), Los Planetas, Niños Mutantes, and Los Evangelistas, who drew primarily on texts by Lorca, but also on works by non-Granadan poets such as Alberti and Machado, while Miguel Hernández’s poetry was adapted by Miguel Ríos. These artists did not merely incorporate poems as song lyrics; they also sought to reinterpret the original texts, often reshaping and resignifying them through various modifications.

6. Lorca: Poetry and Music

Federico García Lorca is primarily regarded as a poet, playwright, and essayist; however, it is equally important to highlight his profound connection with music. Indeed, in Lorca's work, poetry and music are "inseparable" (Torres, 2010, p. 72). In fact, his earliest studies were predominantly musical and, although he would later choose the path of literature, music remained a constant presence throughout his life and work, frequently linked to the city of Granada.

Lorca was born into a family environment in which music played a central role. His uncle Luis played the piano and sang, his aunt Isabel began teaching him the guitar, and the household maids sang lullabies and other traditional Andalusian songs (Tinnell, 1993, p. IX). Moreover, his mother, Vicenta Lorca, was a schoolteacher who ensured that her children received a musical education and, above all, learned to play the piano. Federico began his formal musical training at the age of seven when he enrolled at the Piarist school in the city of Almería, where he was introduced to music theory, harmony, and piano performance. Later, after returning to Granada in 1909, he continued his musical studies, most notably under the guidance of Antonio Segura, his piano teacher, to whom he dedicated his first published book, *Impresiones y paisajes* (*Impressions and Landscapes*) (García, 1918, p. 4).

Lorca's attraction to music was so strong that he seriously considered devoting himself entirely to it and travelling to Paris to pursue advanced musical studies. However, Segura's death in 1916, together with his parents' opposition, definitively brought that ambition to an end (Ossa, 2012, p. 87). Nevertheless, music remained a constant throughout Federico's life. His piano performances at Madrid's Residencia de Estudiantes became particularly renowned, providing opportunities to interact with artists from a wide range of disciplines, attend concerts and lectures on music, become acquainted with the collections of traditional songs compiled by Martínez Torner, Barbieri, and Pedrell, and develop a friendship with the critic, musicologist, and composer Adolfo Salazar (Torres, 2010, p. 198). Equally significant was the friendship Lorca established with Manuel de Falla after the Cádiz-born composer settled in Granada in 1920, a relationship that had a profound influence on the poet's musical development. As his brother Francisco later recalled, Federico found in Falla "the union of the two musical traditions, the cultivated and the popular", together with "a fondness for musical Impressionism" (García, 1999, p. 425).

In addition to his activities as a performer, Lorca also composed a number of works, including *Granada*, and harmonised various traditional melodies that he had collected during his fieldwork as a folklorist, some of it undertaken alongside Ramón Menéndez Pidal and his daughter Jimena. This work resulted in the collection of scores known as *Canciones populares españolas* (*Spanish Folk Songs*) or *Canciones españolas antiguas* (*Old Spanish Songs*), which includes the pieces "Anda jaleo", "Los cuatro muleros", "Las tres hojas", "Los mozos de Monleón", "Las morillas de Jaén", "Sevillanas del siglo XVIII", "El Café de Chinitas", "Nana de Sevilla", "Los pelegrenitos", "Zorongo", "La Tarara", "Romance de don Boyso", and "Los reyes de la baraja". This collection for voice and piano was successfully recorded in 1931 by the record label *La Voz de su Amo*, with Federico at the piano and Encarnación López Júlvez, known as *La Argentinita*, as the vocalist (Ossa, 2014, pp. 101–136).

Lorca's first published collection of poetry was *Libro de poemas* (*Book of Poems*), published in 1921, which he himself associated with "the very emergence of a new shoot on the musical tree of my life in bloom" (p. 7). Indeed, the collection is highly autobiographical, and much of it was written in Granada (Gibson, 1985, p. 291). Throughout the volume there is frequent use of musical terminology, including words such as *harmony*, *silence*, and *song*. Musical references also appear in a number of poem titles, including "Canción otoñal" (*Autumn Song*), "Canción primaveral" (*Spring Song*), "Canción menor" (*Minor Song*), "Canción para la luna" (*Song for the Moon*), "Canción oriental" (*Eastern Song*), "Balada triste" (*Sad Ballad*), "Balada ingenua" (*Naïve Ballad*), "Balada de la plazuela" (*Ballad of the Little Square*), "Madrigal", "Madrigal de verano" (*Summer Madrigal*), "Una campana" (*A Bell*), "Aire de nocturno" (*Nocturne Air*), and "El concierto interrumpido" (*The Interrupted Concert*). The

latter, dedicated to Adolfo Salazar, includes terms such as *fermata*, *harmony*, *music*, *ariston*, and *mute* (Lozano, 2025, p. 4).

Another of Lorca’s works with a particularly strong musical dimension is *Suites*, written between 1921 and 1923, revised in subsequent years, and not published as a collection until 1981 in France and 1983 in Spain by André Belamich. The title itself is musical in nature and reflects the structure of the work, which consists of a sequence of interrelated poems resembling the dance movements of a Baroque suite. Lorca even considered alternative titles for the collection, such as *Libro de las diferencias* (*Book of Variations*), inspired by the *diferencias* or instrumental variations characteristic of the Spanish Renaissance tradition represented by composers such as Antonio de Cabezón, Milán, Mudarra, and the Granadan vihuelist Narváez. Indeed, Belamich suggested that *Suites* may be understood as a series of variations on an initial poem. Lorca also contemplated the title *Cielo bajo* (*Low Sky*), referring to the view of the Albaicín district enjoyed by Falla, Lorca, and their friends from the Alhambra (Gibson, 1985, p. 295).

Suites contains numerous musical concepts in the titles, subtitles, and sections of its poems, including “Suite de los espejos” (*Suite of Mirrors*), “Noche. Suite para piano y voz emocionada” (*Night. Suite for Piano and an Emotional Voice*), “Preludio” (*Prelude*), “Momentos de canción” (*Moments of Song*), “Canciones bajo la luna” (*Songs beneath the Moon*), “Seis canciones de anochecer” (*Six Evening Songs*), “Suite del agua” (*Water Suite*), “Armonía” (*Harmony*), “La canción del cuco viejo” (*The Song of the Old Cuckoo*), “Madrigales” (*Madrigals*), “Canción del jardinero inmóvil” (*Song of the Motionless Gardener*), “Cancioncilla del niño que no nació” (*Little Song of the Child Who Was Never Born*), “Canción del muchacho de siete corazones” (*Song of the Boy with Seven Hearts*), and “Canción morena” (*Dark Song*). These references are complemented by musical vocabulary embedded throughout the poems themselves, including terms such as *music*, *noise*, *harmonic*, *singing*, *silence*, *guitar*, *mandolin*, *piano*, *bell*, *peal*, *drum*, and *ariston*, as well as the names of musical notes. To these are added the sounds of birds, water, wind, weeping, sighs, sobs, and cries.

The third of Lorca’s poetry collections with a clear musical connection is *Canciones* (*Songs*), which brings together poems written between 1921 and 1924, although it was not published until 1927. The volume can be linked to the tradition of songbooks insofar as it comprises poems that lend themselves to being sung. The collection is divided into eleven sections, three of which bear the title *Canciones*: “Canciones para niños” (*Songs for Children*), “Canciones de luna” (*Moon Songs*), and “Canciones para terminar” (*Songs to End With*). To these may be added sections such as “Nocturnos de la ventana” (*Window Nocturnes*) and “Andaluzas” (*Andalusian Poems*), whose titles also evoke the art of sound. Furthermore, many of the individual poems are explicitly designated as songs: “Canción de las siete doncellas” (*Song of the Seven Maidens*), “La canción del colegial” (*The Schoolboy’s Song*), “Canción con movimiento” (*Song with Movement*), “Canción china de Europa” (*Chinese Song of Europe*), “Cancioncilla sevillana” (*Little Sevillian Song*), “Canción cantada” (*Song Sung*), “Canción tonta” (*Foolish Song*), “Canción de jinete” (*Rider’s Song*), “Canción del mariquita” (*Song of the Young Dandy*), “Árbol de canción” (*Tree of Song*), “Cancioncilla del primer deseo” (*Little Song of the First Desire*), “Canción de noviembre y abril” (*Song of November and April*), “Canción inútil” (*Useless Song*), “Canción del naranjo seco” (*Song of the Withered Orange Tree*), and “Canción del día que se va” (*Song of the Departing Day*). Other poems contain explicit musical references in their titles, such as “Nocturno esquemático” (*Schematic Nocturne*), “El canto que quiere ser luz” (*The Song that Wishes to Become Light*), “Serenata” (*Serenade*), and “Preludio” (*Prelude*).

Another musical feature of *Canciones* (*Songs*) is that two of its poems are dedicated to composer friends associated with the Generation of ’27: “Friso” (*Frieze*), dedicated to Gustavo Durán, and “Cortaron tres árboles” (*They Cut Down Three Trees*), dedicated to Ernesto Halffter. To these may be added a third poem, whose dedication is already evident in its title: “Debussy”. The French composer was a major source of inspiration for Lorca’s early poetry and had himself composed piano works inspired by Granada, including “Soirée dans Grenade” (*Evening in Granada*) from *Estampes* and “La Puerta del Vino” (*The Wine*

Gate) from the second book of his *Préludes*, inspired by a postcard that Manuel de Falla sent him in Paris depicting the monument. One of the poems in *Canciones* that most successfully brings together music, poetry, and Granada is “Granada y 1850” (*Granada and 1850*), in which “the city is imbued with musicality through sonic images and metaphors drawn from nature and the landscape, creating evocative atmospheres, in this case through fountains and water jets” (Lozano, 2025, p. 6).

The final work by Lorca considered here is *Poema del cante jondo* (*Poem of Deep Song*), written at the end of 1921 in parallel with preparations for the *Concurso de Cante Jondo*, held on 13 and 14 June 1922 in the Plaza de los Aljibes of the Alhambra. The competition was conceived and supported by the poet alongside other intellectuals, including Manuel de Falla. Its purpose was to recover the original Andalusian song tradition and, more broadly, to reclaim popular music as a cultural expression free from clichés and stereotypes (Berlanga, 2023). The book itself was not published until 1931. It opens with a poem that functions as a prologue, “Baladilla de los tres ríos” (*Little Ballad of the Three Rivers*), which situates Granada within the geography of Andalusia as the city of tragic consciousness, embodied in the anguished cry, lament, and sorrow of *cante jondo*, in contrast to more benign cities such as Seville.

This opening poem is followed by four central sections inspired by different *palos* (styles) of flamenco: “Poema de la seguriya gitana” (*Poem of the Gypsy Seguriya*), “Poema de la soleá” (*Poem of the Soleá*), “Poema de la saeta” (*Poem of the Saeta*), and “Gráfico de la petenera” (*Diagram of the Petenera*). Each of these sections is subdivided into poems in which music and sound are constant presences, not only in the verses themselves but already in their titles, including *La guitarra* (*The Guitar*), *El grito* (*The Cry*), *El silencio* (*Silence*), *La soleá* (*The Soleá*), *Saeta*, *Campana* (*Bell*), *La seis cuerdas* (*The Six Strings*), *Danza* (*Dance*), *Muerte de la petenera* (*Death of the Petenera*), *Falseta*, and *Clamor* (*Outcry*).

The central section is followed by a sequence of flamenco tableaux grouped into four sections: “Dos muchachas” (*Two Young Women*), “Viñetas flamencas” (*Flamenco Vignettes*), “Tres ciudades” (*Three Cities*), and “Seis caprichos” (*Six Caprices*). Among these are poems devoted to the flamenco singers Silverio Franconetti and Juan Breva, dedicated by Lorca to the singer Manuel Torres, known as *El Niño de Jerez*. Others, such as “Adivinanza de la guitarra” (*Riddle of the Guitar*) and “Crótalo” (*Castanet*), are dedicated to the guitarist Regino Sáinz de la Maza. Indeed, the guitar constitutes a recurring motif throughout the entire collection. Finally, the volume concludes with two dialogues in which misfortune, danger, wounded life, and death are vividly portrayed (García, 1990, p. 36). In *Poema del cante jondo*, Lorca ultimately brings together poetry and music within a lyrical and dramatic vision through which he represents Granada, Andalusia, and Spain (García, 2014, p. 105).

7. Water and its Music

In the summer of 1922, Federico García Lorca wrote a letter to his friend Melchor Fernández Almagro in which he articulated what might be regarded as a poetics of water, closely linked to the devotion accorded to this element within Muslim culture. More specifically, Lorca told his friend that he wished to write a book about water after envisioning “a great poem, somewhere between the Oriental and the Christian-European, devoted to water; a poem in which the passionate life and sufferings of water would be sung in broad verses or highly *rubato* prose, [...] with the most detailed analyses [...] of the intoxicated music, untouched by any silence, produced by flowing currents” (Lorca, 1997, p. 156). Music thus assumes a decisive role within this poetics, allowing us to speak of a distinctly Lorquian music of water, a conception of water and its music that is closely related to Granada’s position at the crossroads of two cultures. Nor should it be forgotten that, as previously noted, in October 1926 Lorca wrote to the same recipient describing the city as not picturesque but rather poetic and musical.

The music of Granada’s waters had already attracted the attention of writers such as Antonio de Zayas, Manuel Machado, and Francisco Villaespesa within the context of Spanish

Modernism. It also captivated Juan Ramón Jiménez during his visit to the city in 1924, when he explored emblematic sites such as the Alhambra and the Generalife in the company of the Lorca family. Writing from Madrid to Isabel Lorca, Federico’s sister—the “little fairy of the Generalife”, to whom he dedicated the well-known romance bearing the name of the palace-garden in his book *Olvidos de Granada (Memories of Granada)* (Jiménez, 1945/2008, pp. 39–43)—Juan Ramón reflected:

Light and water create within me the most prodigious labyrinths—low skies, delirious Generalifes—and the sun tinges me with a wondrous sorrow, while the water sounds as though it were my own blood. At times, the noise of this dream-blood water is such that it awakens me distressed, my heart transformed into a tower”. (Jiménez, 2008, p. 18)

Furthermore, during his stay in Granada, Juan Ramón also met Manuel de Falla at the Carmen de la Antequeruela. Writing to his wife Zenobia, who had already returned to Madrid, he described how “Falla came, delightful as always, and last night he played for us until two in the morning, amidst a marvellous landscape” (Jiménez, 1945/2008, p. 12). This encounter would later give rise to the literary portrait of Falla that Juan Ramón published in *Espaníoles de tres mundos (Spaniards from Three Worlds)* (1942/1958, pp. 68–69).

It may be said that the music of Granada’s waters has remained, up to the present day, an essential motif for many poets. The sounds of irrigation channels, of emblematic fountains such as the Fuente del Avellano, and of the rivers that flow through Granada constitute a recurring presence in their poetic representations of the city.

8. Encounters in the City

Identifying the locations in which poetic-musical synergies and creative encounters took place contributes to revealing the cultural identity of Granada’s urban space, while also highlighting the artistic forms through which the contemporary city has been shaped.

8.1. Artistic and Literary Lyceum

In 1833, a literary circle emerged in Granada which, in 1839, was formally established as an institution with the participation of the city’s substantial aristocratic and bourgeois elites: the Artistic and Literary Lyceum (*Liceo Artístico y Literario*). Its first phase lasted from 1839 to 1843 and was based at the Miguel School on Calle Duquesa. It disappeared for political reasons but re-emerged in 1847 under the name *Sociedad Literaria y Artística de Granada* (Literary and Artistic Society of Granada), before recovering its original title in 1849 with the aim of promoting literature and the fine arts (Vargas, 2019, pp. 256–259). It was subsequently established in the Realejo district, in the Dominican convent of Santa Cruz la Real, and later moved to premises beneath the Teatro Principal in Plaza del Campillo (Vargas, 2019, p. 271). The society maintained several channels of communication, among which *La Alhambra. Periódico de Ciencias, Literatura y Bellas Artes (La Alhambra: Journal of Science, Literature and Fine Arts)* was particularly noteworthy during its first phase (Vargas, 2019, pp. 261–262).

The Lyceum was organised into four sections devoted to both educational and recreational activities: Science and Literature, Music, Fine Arts, and, from 1841 onwards, Declamation (Vargas, 2019, p. 258). Its programme included literary competitions and floral games, in which poetry occupied a central position, alongside concerts, dances, lectures, theatrical performances, and even the proposal and coronation of José Zorrilla as Spain’s national poet in 1889. Poetry and music were closely intertwined in the Lyceum’s activities. Evidence of this can be found in the literary-musical evenings held from the 1850s onwards, during which piano works and songs with piano accompaniment alternated with poetry recitations. In these events, music served to accompany the opening and interludes. Likewise, the general social gatherings combined the performance of salon music with the

recitation of poetry, speeches, and even the staging of zarzuelas and short comedies (Vargas, 2019, pp. 270–271).

As regards music, the meetings were attended not only by members of the Music Section and musicians associated with it, such as Bernabé Ruiz de Henares, Mariano Vázquez, Baltasar Mira, José Espinel, Giorgio Ronconi, Antonio Segura, Francisco de Paula Valladar, and Eduardo Güervós, but also by figures of considerable international prominence, including the mezzo-soprano Paulina Viardot, the tenor Enrico Tamberlick, the violinist Andrés Fortuny, and the composer Hilarión Eslava (Vargas, 2019, pp. 274, 283, and 300). Collaborative work among members of the Lyceum and its wider circle gave rise to works such as the verse zarzuela *La vuelta de Escupe-jumos* (1849), with a text by Antonio Romero and music by Antonio de la Cruz, and *Las siete palabras* (*The Seven Last Words*) (1856), composed for a religious service with a text by José Salvador and music by Mariano Vázquez.

8.2. *La Cuerda*

Between 1850 and 1854, Granada was home to a celebrated and irreverent literary gathering known as *La Cuerda* (*The Rope*) (Vargas, 2015, p. 42). Its regular meeting place was Juan de Dios Hurtado's café in El Campillo. The members of the circle referred to themselves as *nudos* ("knots") and adopted corresponding nicknames. They also met in one another's homes, particularly at the residence of the musician Mariano Vázquez (*Maestro Puertas*) on Calle Recogidas and at the *carmen* of the baritone Giorgio Ronconi (*Ropones*) in the Antequeruela district (Vargas, 2015, pp. 50–51). Most of the *nudos* were in their twenties and became well known throughout the city for their lively antics, whether creating a commotion after theatre performances, singing serenades, organising donkey excursions, or attending other humorous social gatherings of the period, such as *El Pellejo*, held in the area around Plaza Nueva.

In addition to musicians, *La Cuerda* included lawyers, painters, military officers, politicians, and writers who cultivated poetry, among them Pedro Antonio de Alarcón (*Alcofre*) and José Salvador (*La Palissade*), whose texts were subsequently set to music by other members of the group (Vargas, 2015, pp. 59–120). Particularly noteworthy are the two manuscript albums produced by the gathering, written with great wit, imagination, and humour by its members during their meetings. These volumes contain jokes, drawings, accounts of absurd incidents, several musical scores, and a large number of poems. Both are currently preserved in Granada's Casa de los Tiros Museum (Vargas, 2015, pp. 163–194).

8.3. *Artistic, Literary and Scientific Centre*

The Artistic, Literary and Scientific Centre (*Centro Artístico, Literario y Científico*) is a private cultural institution with a strong social vocation, founded in Granada in 1885 and still active today. Its purpose is to promote and encourage the study of the fine arts, literature, and sciences, while maintaining a pronounced commitment to Granada's cultural heritage and identity (Centro Artístico, 2015, pp. 1–2). Over the years, the institution has occupied several locations across the city, from its first premises in Plaza Nueva to its current headquarters in the Isabel la Católica Theatre building, with intermediate locations on Calle del Ángel, Plaza del Carmen, Calle Reyes, Plaza de Cuchilleros, Carrera del Darro, and Plaza del Campillo (Alonso, 1984, p. 4). Among its founders and first governing board were the merchant Vicente Arteaga; the lawyer, guitar maker, and entrepreneur Agustín Caro; the physicians Rafael Branchat and Vicente Barrecheguren; the painter Manuel Gómez-Moreno; and the writer and historian Francisco de Paula Valladar (Fernández, 1989, pp. 24 and 157).

From its inception, the Centre has attached great importance to both poetry and music, whether as separate artistic expressions or integrated within joint recitals. Indeed, its programme actively encouraged the composition of musical works based on literary texts. One of the earliest examples was the *Himno a Fray Luis de Granada* (*Hymn to Fray Luis de Granada*), composed in 1888 to mark the third centenary of his death, with lyrics by Francisco Jiménez Campaña, rector of the Piarist Schools, and music by Celestino Vila de

Forns, chapel master of Granada Cathedral. The work was performed by the Artistic Centre Choir as its debut performance under the direction of Aureliano del Pino (Fernández, 1989, p. 32). It is also worth noting that the institution has maintained a dedicated Music Section since 1887 (directed, for example, by Ángel Barrios between 1922 and 1925), which has organised numerous concerts and lectures over the years. Indeed, its expertise in organising musical events led the Directorate-General for Fine Arts to entrust the Centre, together with the Casa de América, with the organisation of the first three editions of what is now the Granada International Festival of Music and Dance in 1952.

Poetry has likewise occupied a prominent place within the Centre’s activities, with particularly significant periods such as the 1920s and 1930s, coinciding with the presence of Lorca. Significantly, Lorca’s first published text appeared in the *Boletín del Centro*, and he also performed piano works and delivered his lecture “El cante Jondo” (*Deep Song*) at the Centre’s premises on 19 February 1922 (Fernández, 1989, p. 210). Another important period came during the 1960s, with the poets of the so-called “Generation of ’50” and the Granadan group *Versos al Aire Libre*, which included Ruiz del Castillo, Guillén, Martín-Vivaldi, Ladrón de Guevara, and Gutiérrez Padial. From this period onwards, the Centre organised the so-called *Fiestas de la Poesía* (*Poetry Festivals*). At the first edition, held in 1960, Antonio Gallego Morell delivered the opening address, poems by Elena Martín Vivaldi, Eulalia Dolores de la Higuera, and Antonio Pérez Alameda were read, and José Ladrón de Guevara, Rafael Guillén, and Miguel Ruiz del Castillo were among those in attendance. The event concluded with a performance by the Granadan pianist Maribel Calvín (Fernández, 1989, p. 126).

8.4. *Cofradía del Avellano*

Several springs can be found along the *Camino del Avellano*, fed for centuries by leaks and seepage from the irrigation channels of the Generalife and the Alhambra. The most emblematic of these, and perhaps of Granada as a whole, is the *Fuente del Avellano*. It was here, during the final decade of the nineteenth century, that a group of intellectuals and artists led by the diplomat Ángel Ganivet gathered in an informal circle known as the *Cofradía del Avellano* (López, ca. 1935, pp. 15–20). Without statutes, premises, or formal membership, the group nevertheless developed a distinctive cultural identity. During their meetings, participants discussed distant cities and works of art, read poetry and prose, and listened to *cante* and guitar music, most often performed by the member nicknamed “Perico el Moro”, the lawyer and writer Gabriel Ruiz de Almodóvar. The gatherings would eventually come to an end when “suddenly, the bell of the Vela Tower rang out majestically” (López, 1971, p. 78).

Several members of the *Cofradía del Avellano* contributed to the volume *Libro de Granada* (*Book of Granada*), published in 1899, in which they produced prose and poetry portraying different scenes from contemporary life in the city. These depictions are rich in sonic and musical imagery, ranging from the sound of church bells to the chorus of birds bidding farewell to the day in the Alhambra (García, 2022, pp. 148–154). The *Fuente del Avellano* has also inspired the composition of a considerable number of songs, the most famous of which is *El agua del Avellano*, composed by José María Legaza and recorded in 1952 by Antonio Molina.

8.5. *El Rinconcillo*

The Café Alameda, also known as the *Gran Café*, was located in Plaza del Campillo and opened in 1885. Inside, beyond the platform where a string quintet with piano regularly provided musical entertainment, there was a small corner furnished with a few sofas and several iron tables. This space was chosen by a group of intellectuals as the meeting place for a literary gathering that met between 1915 and 1929 and became known by the name of its location: *El Rinconcillo*. The group sought to renew the ideals of Granadan culture and,

in this sense, represented a certain opposition to the traditionalism associated with the Artistic Centre (Gibson, 2011, pp. 120–155).

Under the leadership and guidance of Francisco Soriano Lapresa, professor at both the University of Granada and the Royal Conservatory of Music and Declamation, the gathering attracted politicians such as Fernando de los Ríos and Antonio Gallego Burín; journalists including Melchor Fernández Almagro and José Mora Guarnido; painters such as Manuel Ángeles Ortiz and Hermenegildo Lanz; poets including Federico García Lorca and his brother Francisco; and musicians such as Manuel de Falla and Ángel Barrios. The circle even acquired an international dimension through visits by figures such as the British writers Herbert George Wells and Rudyard Kipling, as well as the Polish musicians Arthur Rubinstein and Wanda Landowska.

Many influential ideas emerged from the members of *El Rinconcillo*, among them the organisation of the *Concurso de Cante Jondo* held at the Alhambra in June 1922. The event received funding from Granada City Council and was further supported through fundraising campaigns and benefit performances. One such event was a poetic-musical evening held at the theatre of the Alhambra Palace Hotel, where Lorca gave the first public reading of his *Poema del Cante Jondo*, while Andrés Segovia and his teacher Porcel, known as *El Niño de Baza*, performed guitar variations based on *soleares* (Mora, 1958, p. 161). On occasion, the members of *El Rinconcillo* also met in other venues across the city, such as the tavern *El Polinario* in the Alhambra, owned by Ángel Barrios's father, where guitar playing and *cante* were ever-present features of the gatherings (Mora, 1958, pp. 153–154).

8.6. *La Tertulia*

The 1980s were a period of profound change throughout Spain, marked by the transition from Franco's dictatorship to democracy, beginning with the first democratic elections in 1977 and the ratification of the Spanish Constitution by referendum in 1978. It was a time of cultural renewal, which in Granada was strongly shaped by the city's university environment. It was within this context that Horacio Rébora, better known as "Tato", arrived in Granada in 1980. The son of an architect who had served as rector of the National University of Córdoba in Argentina, Rébora conceived the idea of opening a bar, *La Tertulia*, which soon became a legendary venue and a genuine catalyst for Granada's cultural life. Novelists such as Antonio Muñoz Molina, musicians including Enrique Morente, and poets associated with *La otra sentimentalidad* regularly gathered there (Rébora, 2010).

The idea of organising a tango festival also emerged from *La Tertulia*. Today in its thirty-seventh edition, it was the second festival of its kind in the world after the one in Montevideo. Its origins can be traced to the volume published in 1982 under the title *Granada-tango. Libro para bailar con las ciudades y en solidaridad con nosotros mismos* (*Granada-Tango: A Book for Dancing with Cities and in Solidarity with Ourselves*), a remarkable fusion of literature, music, dance, and everyday life, edited by Horacio Rébora and featuring contributions by Rébora himself, Mariano Maresca, and Juan Carlos Rodríguez.

Over the decades, *La Tertulia* has also published several books in which poetry occupies a prominent place. In 2000, it launched the literary journal *Contra Tiempo: Revista Polifónica de Artificios Literarios* (*Counter Time: A Polyphonic Journal of Literary Artifices*), with poetry as its central focus. The title itself contains a clear musical allusion, and music is present throughout the publication, both in the poems and in short articles devoted to musicians—for example, Daniel Rodríguez Moya's piece on José Ignacio Lapido in 2002—as well as in chronicles of the bar's cultural activities. One such example is the tribute paid to the poet Ángel González in 2003, in which Joaquín Sabina participated by reading several poems, including the piece he dedicated to González under the title "Sevillanas a Ángel González". Today, *La Tertulia* continues to sustain an extensive programme of poetic and musical activities throughout the year.

9. Conclusions

This study has identified the “poetic and musical” Granada to which García Lorca referred in 1926: a city characterised by continuous poetic-musical encounters that have formed an essential part of its vibrant cultural life from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to the present day. These encounters take place in, or draw inspiration from, a variety of urban settings, from its fountains and rivers to its streets, theatres, and monuments, transforming them into genuine catalysts for artistic creation and human interaction. On many occasions, the synergies between poetry and music in Granada have developed under the auspices of institutions dedicated to intellectual cultivation and bourgeois leisure. At the same time, they have also emerged from less structured groups distinguished by remarkable creative spontaneity, bringing together politics, economics, science, and the arts.

The study also demonstrates that poets have adopted music as an essential component of their language and of poetic expression, giving rise to the recurring motif of the music of water, all within a clear framework of artistic intermediality. Likewise, composers have worked closely with poets, drawing on poetry both as a source of inspiration and as a significant element of their creative practice. In addition, Federico García Lorca has been presented as a paradigmatic example of the relationship between poetry and music, a relationship that has subsequently shaped the work of numerous poets, performers, and composers up to the present day.

Finally, it should be noted that poetic-musical encounters in the city have also possessed a social dimension and have contributed to the construction of a distinct Granadan identity. At the same time, this identity has become increasingly connected to the universal Andalusianism advocated by Juan Ramón Jiménez, particularly during the second half of the twentieth century.

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