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Nationalism, Identity and the Theatre Across the Spanish State in the Democratic Era, 1975 - 2010

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A HISTORY OF
Theatre in Spain

Edited by Maria M. Delgado and David T. Gies

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19 Nationalism, identity and the theatre across the Spanish state in the democratic era, 1975–2010

SHARON G. FELDMAN AND ANXO ABUÍN GONZÁLEZ

The idea of a national theatre in its modern incarnation emerged during the eighteenth century, coinciding with the political and social turmoil of the French Revolution. Its intellectual and aesthetic origins thus can be traced to concerns with individual expression and national identity that came to light in relation to European Romanticism.¹ Since that time, a myriad of public institutions, some of them quite massive and others more diminutive, have surfaced on the European theatrical landscape in accordance with the post-Enlightenment concept of a national theatre. They are designed to encourage a national consciousness, as well as create, promote and safeguard a national repertoire. Curiously, these institutions have often predated the establishment of the nation-states whose interests they would come to represent. The disintegration of empires, the ensuing creation of nation-states (and, in some cases, their postcolonial deconstruction or collapse), the spread of cosmopolitanism and migratory and exilic movements all influenced the evolution of the national theatre. For Loren Kruger, consequently, the idea of a national stage, in its modern sense, exists within an inherently 'transnational field', in which varying claims to the authority and legitimacy of languages, cultures, locations, borders and audiences have all played a role in its conception.²

The political-cultural climate of Spain during the post-Franco transition to democracy was characterised, in a parallel manner, by a situation of competing assertions and assumptions with regard to self-determination, national identity and cultural legitimacy. Censorship, which lingered

1 Loren Kruger, *The National Stage: Theater and Cultural Legitimation in England, France, and America* (University of Chicago Press, 1992) and 'National Stage and Nationalized House: (Trans)National Legitimation in Modern Europe', in S.E. Wilmer (ed.), *National Theatres in a Changing Europe* (New York: Palgrave, 2008), pp. 34–48.

2 Kruger, 'National Stage and Nationalized House', pp. 34–5.

beyond the death of Franco in 1975, ended officially in 1977. The contemporary configuration of Spain, implemented with the Constitution of 1978, as a nation-state composed of seventeen autonomous communities, has given renewed impetus to deep-seated historical claims concerning cultural and linguistic identities in areas such as the Basque Country, the Catalan-speaking lands and Galicia. Spain's entry into the European Union in 1986 emboldened political groups inclined to question the sovereignty of the Spanish state by encouraging either a plurinational arrangement or even independence. The concept of a national theatre as it emerged within post-Franco Spain was, accordingly, decidedly transnational.

The Centro Dramático Nacional (CDN; the publicly subsidised national dramatic centre of Spain) was established in Madrid in 1977. Subsequently, throughout the 1980s, as the Spanish central government shifted towards the political left, a move towards decentralisation provoked the emergence of several national 'drama centres', each underwritten by local governments in Andalusia, the Balearic Islands, the Basque Country, Catalonia, Extremadura, Galicia and Valencia. These public institutions were created according to varying principles of international projection, nationalism and protectionism. Most were established in order to promote and showcase autochthonous theatre from distinct historical repertoires, as well as encourage the work of contemporary playwrights. For those theatre artists situated on the periphery in relation to Madrid, the creation of national drama centres became a way of expressing cultural, linguistic and/or political identity and of countering what had once been the centralising forces of the Franco regime.

The representation of cultural identity on stage is a subjective process, entailing an intrinsic set of problems with regard to authority and legitimacy. For a theatre community to bring to life a national narrative, the stage is often conceived as a site of struggle and resistance, of fluctuating cultural, social and political negotiations. In contemporary Spain, perhaps there has been no greater cynic with regard to the presence of public theatre institutions than Albert Boadella (b. 1943), a founding member and director of the Catalan theatre company Els Joglars. In 1989, the year in which the Catalan government announced its plans for the construction of the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya (TNC) and the redesign of the Teatre Lliure in Barcelona as a public institution, Boadella proclaimed, mockingly, that he was renaming his company 'Els Joglars-Teatre Nacional de Catalunya'.³

3 See Jill Lane, 'Albert Boadella and the Catalan Comedy of Cultural Politics', *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, 11.1 (Fall 1996), 81–98.

A few years later, Els Joglars' performance piece *El Nacional* (The National, 1993) offered a critique of state-sponsored culture and its supposedly corrupting powers.⁴ In it Boadella used Giuseppe Verdi's nineteenth-century opera *Rigoletto* as an ironic intertext in which the figure of the carnivalesque hunchbacked jester served as an apt metaphor for the theatre spectacle in its most untainted state, prior to the creation of official cultural institutions.

In the twenty-first century, national theatres in Spain are spaces that often exhibit international drama, as well as local work; theatre for mature audiences, as well as for children; dance, as well as text-based drama and other forms of performance. Persistent questions have surfaced with regard to the degree of aesthetic risk that artistic directors should assume in their programming. Does the nature of public theatre and public funding allow for a margin of daring, or should public institutions endeavour to reflect or even cater to the mainstream (or, bourgeois) aesthetic tastes of their citizenry? Should the interests of the governing political parties influence programming decisions? In Althusserian terms, should a national theatre be conceived as an 'ideological state apparatus'?⁵ These are among the issues that have emerged as part of the backdrop in the evolution of national theatres in contemporary Spain.

Madrid

An attitude of disillusionment (or, 'disenchantment', as it is commonly known) enveloped the institutionalisation of the theatre scene during the transition to democracy. An editorial appearing in 2001 in *ADE-Teatro*, the quarterly published by the Association of Theatre Directors of Spain, declared the 'transition' to be virtually non-existent in the realm of the theatre, for although official censorship had ended and the availability of public subsidies had significantly increased, the political biases, arbitrariness of decision-making and lack of a coherent vision for the theatre remained unchanged throughout the period.⁶

During the transition, the Spanish government had looked to European models, especially France, for the revamping and revitalisation of cultural

4 Albert Boadella, *El Nacional*, with *La torna, M-7 Catalònia, Teleducum, Columbi lapsus* and *Yo tengo un tío en América* (Barcelona: Institut del Teatre de la Diputació de Barcelona, 2002), pp. 485–577.

5 Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press 2001).

6 'Un Plan Nacional para el Teatro', *ADE-Teatro*, 84 (January–March 2001), 5–9.

institutions. The right-centrist Unión del Centro Democrático (UCD), the 'transitional' party led by Adolfo Suárez, who served as Prime Minister from 1976 to 1981, converted what had been the former Francoist Ministry of Communication and Tourism into the Ministry of Culture. It was a move reminiscent of Charles de Gaulle's establishment in 1959 of the French Ministry of Culture, which he placed in the hands of André Malraux. The French notion of democratic, egalitarian access to culture, along with Malraux's concept of a Centre Dramatique National, were influential in the creation of Madrid's Centro Dramático Nacional (CDN) in 1978.⁷ The term *centro dramático* signified a turn away from what had been the old national theatre model of the regime and a step in the direction of renovation. The María Guerrero, a historic theatre of nineteenth-century origins with a proximity to the central Paseo de Recoletos, was designated the principal home for the CDN.

The aura of newness was tempered by a piecemeal approach to cultural politics and a predominant sentiment that, although many faces and names had changed, others remained the same. Pío Cabanillas, to cite one example, was appointed as the first Spanish Minister of Culture in 1977, having held the position of Minister of Information and Tourism during the final years of the dictatorship. This peculiarly repetitive arrangement would thwart any sort of comparison with French Minister of Cultural Affairs Malraux, who had fought in Spain during the Civil War on the side of the Republican forces. As César Oliva makes clear, the imprint left by many of the bureaucrats who were directly implicated in the censorship practices of the regime was not easily erased, hence the feeling of static immobility described in the editorial published in *ADE-Teatro*.⁸ One of the more concretely damaging consequences of this stagnant environment was that many doors were closed to dramatists and theatre practitioners who had gained notoriety during the dictatorship for their creation of a theatre of protest and social commitment. These included some of the most imaginative and forward-thinking members of the independent theatre movement, who had introduced innovative performance practices drawn from the international theatre scene. Furthermore, the suppression of historical memory that defined the period gave limited stage access to

7 Marvin Carlson, 'National Theatres: Then and Now', in Steve Wilmer (ed.), *National Theatres in a Changing Europe*, pp. 21–33 (pp. 30–1).

8 César Oliva, *La última escena (Teatro español de 1975 a nuestros días)* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2004), pp. 61–3.

the playwrights of the so-called 'realist' and 'symbolist' generations, who had employed allegory during the post-Civil War period as a way of eluding the gaze of the censors.⁹

Cabanillas named Rafael Pérez Sierra to serve in the newly created position of Director-General of Theatre in 1978, marking the beginning of a succession of ephemeral appointments and pairings occurring during the time of UCD governance. Pérez Sierra appointed Adolfo Marsillach (1928–2002), a Catalan actor, playwright and director who had been in charge of the Teatro Español when it was still a national theatre (1965–6), as the first artistic director of the CDN.¹⁰ In the European style of incorporating two performance spaces, large and small, into the national drama centre, Madrid's Teatro Bellas Artes was designated a second stage for the CDN and was used for this purpose until 1980. To his credit, Marsillach programmed several authors who had been marginalised by the regime. The Bellas Artes, in its new incarnation, opened with the production by director José Luis Gómez (b. 1940) of *Bodas que fueron famosas del Pingajo y la Fandanga* (The Once Famous Wedding of Pingajo and Fandanga, 1978) by José María Rodríguez Méndez (1925–2009). The María Guerrero opened with the historic *mise-en-scène* of Rafael Alberti's (1902–99) *Noche de guerra en el Museo del Prado* (A Night of War in the Prado Museum, 1956) by director Ricard Salvat (1934–2009).¹¹ Marsillach was also responsible for programming an impressive array of texts by dramatists such as Luis Riaza (b. 1925) (*Retrato de dama con perrito* [Portrait of Woman with Dog, 1979]), Josep Maria Benet i Jornet (b. 1940) (*Motín de brujas* [Witches' Revolt, 1980]), and Luis Matilla (b. 1938) (*Ejercicios para equilibristas* ([Exercises for Tightrope Walkers, 1980]), in addition to *Laetius* (1980), a striking visual spectacle created by Els Joglars.

Marsillach, seemingly unsurpassed by his successors in terms of his efforts to reclaim the work of playwrights who had been met with the obstacles of censorship, resigned from the position of artistic director in 1979. A tripartite directorship composed of Núria Espert (b. 1935), José Luis Gómez and Ramón Tamayo (1921–2008) was appointed by then

9 *Ibid.*, p. 123. 10 *Ibid.*, p. 63.

11 Bernardo Antonio González, 'Teatro Nacional e ideología en España: El caso del María Guerrero', *Gestos*, 8.15 (April 1993), 65–82 (p. 76); Alberto Fernández Torres, 'La crisis de identidad del teatro público en España', *El Público*, 78 (May–June 1990), pp. 62–9. Reprinted in *El Público: Historia, antología e índices* (Madrid: Centro de Documentación Teatral, 1999), 46–52 (p. 49).

Director-General Alberto de la Hera to succeed him. The three directors remained in charge of the centre until 1981, with one of their main goals being that of converting the CDN into a connective hub for the diversity of cultures within Spain.¹² José Luis Alonso (1924–90) served as artistic director of the CDN from 1981 to 1983 and, during his second season, began to programme younger contemporary dramatists, such as José Luis Alonso de Santos (b. 1942) and Fermín Cabal (b. 1948), alongside works by classical dramatists. In 1984, the Sala Olimpia, located on the Plaza de Lavapiés, replaced the Teatro Bellas Artes as the second stage of the CDN when the latter passed into private hands.¹³

Considerable changes emerged on the theatrical landscape when Prime Minister Felipe González and the left-wing Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) came to power in 1982. The haze appeared to lift, as the new government arrived with an unmistakable desire to create a significant break with the past, to revitalise the Spanish stage, accentuating creativity and freedom of expression, and enabling the public theatre sector to acquire a degree of originality and artistic quality compatible with the highest European standards. Substantial funding through a new system of public subventions was allocated to this end, and budgets were elevated to levels that were even regarded as lavish.¹⁴ Javier Solana Madariaga was appointed Minister of Culture, and the position of Director-General of Music and Theatre went to José Manuel Garrido. In 1985, the González government created, as a subdivision of the Ministry of Culture, the Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música (INAEM; National Institute for the Performing Arts and Music) to replace the former Dirección General de Música y Teatro.¹⁵ Garrido was appointed as Director of the INAEM, and the fact that he held virtually the same post for four years before moving on to be Assistant Secretary of Culture between 1989 and 1992 brought a continuity of vision to the performing arts scene that was lacking during the period in which the UCD was in power.¹⁶ The Centro de Documentación Teatral (CDT), the national centre for theatre research and documentation, was revitalised under the auspices of the INAEM.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 49. 13 Oliva, *La última escena*, pp. 69–70. 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.

15 'Real Decreto 565/1985, de 24 de abril, por el que se establece la estructura orgánica básica del Ministerio de Cultura y de sus Organismos autónomos', *BOE*, 103 (30 April 1985), pp. 11986, 11994.

16 He was succeeded as Director of the INAEM by Adolfo Marsillach, who held the position between 14 July 1989 and 8 November 1990.

Other changes implemented by the socialist government during the 1980s included a more decentralised conception of national theatre, which encouraged the creation of several public drama centres dispersed throughout the Spanish state – a replication of the French model.¹⁷ The INAEM has since come to serve as a central point of coordination and a source of public funding for these centres, which in some instances still dot the Spanish landscape.

In 1984, the INAEM converted the nineteenth-century Teatro de la Zarzuela into a national theatre with the aim of promoting Spanish operetta. Furthermore, given the focus of the CDN on modern and contemporary authors, the INAEM created the Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC), modelled on the Comédie-Française, in 1986 with the purpose of recuperating, safeguarding and disseminating the tradition of Spanish classical theatre.¹⁸ Marsillach was the first director of the CNTC, from 1986 to 1989, and served again in the same capacity from 1992 to 1997. The company's primary home has been the Teatro de la Comedia in Madrid, but it also has an established base at the Hospital de San Juan, a performance space of medieval origins that it uses during the annual Festival Internacional de Teatro Clásico in the town of Almagro. Between 2004 and 2011, the director of the CNTC was Eduardo Vasco (b. 1968), and in recent years the company has co-produced plays with other national drama centres, such as the TNC.

In keeping with the idea of empowering dramaturgies from beyond the Castilian centre, the CDN passed into the hands of a Catalan artistic director, Lluís Pasqual (b. 1951), in 1983. While Barcelona had served as an important training ground in Pasqual's artistic formation (he had been one of the founding directors of the Teatre Lliure), he also arrived in Madrid with considerable knowledge of the European theatre scene.¹⁹ Pasqual's term at the helm of the CDN was characterised by an aspiration to open the centre to international theatrical currents and strengthen the figure of the artistic director, thus bringing it in line with other European national drama centres.²⁰ Pasqual immediately opened the CDN to playwrights from Spain writing in languages other than Spanish, such as

17 See María José Ragué-Arias, *El teatro de fin de milenio de España (De 1975 hasta hoy)* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1996), pp. 120–5.

18 See teatroclasico.mcu.es/es/compania/historia.asp.

19 See Chapter 20 for further details, pp. 445–6.

20 Fernández Torres, 'La crisis de identidad', p. 50.

Rodolf Sirera (b. 1948) of Valencia and Salvador Espriu (1913–85) of Catalonia, both of whose works were programmed at the Teatro Olimpia in 1982. The CDN hosted a series of international companies and directors including Zlatko Bourek, Lindsay Kemp, Jérôme Savary and Giorgio Strehler. In addition, Pasqual established relationships and joint productions between the CDN and other European theatres, directors and companies. A defining moment in terms of these relationships occurred in February 1984, when his production of Valle-Inclán's *Luces de bohemia* (Bohemian Lights), with a set design by Puigserver, premiered at the Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe in Paris (where Strehler was artistic director), before moving on to the stage of the María Guerrero in October of the same year.²¹ Under Pasqual's astute guidance, audiences increased, and the CDN enjoyed box-office successes, which included his own stagings, with sets by Fabià Puigserver, of Lorca's *El público* (The Public) in 1987 and *Comedia sin título* (Play without a Title) in 1989 (see Fig. 27, p. 475). Pasqual would go on to become a member of what Maria M. Delgado has called the 'European superleague of directors'.²²

The Sala Olimpia became the seat of the Centro Nacional de Nuevas Tendencias Escénicas (CNNTE; National Centre for New Tendencies in the Performing Arts) in 1984. Its artistic director, Guillermo Heras (b. 1952), had ties to the theatre reviews *Primer Acto* and *Pipirijaina* and had participated in the Spanish independent theatre movement as a member of the Madrid-based collective Tábano. Heras embarked on a mission to convert the CNNTE into a place that could accentuate the value of creative risk and experimentation through contact with new theatrical, paratheatrical and interdisciplinary forms and sensibilities.²³ Among the playwrights whose work was exhibited at the Sala Olimpia (and subsequently edited in the CNNTE's publication series) were Álvaro del Amo (b. 1942), Marisa Ares (b. 1960), Ernesto Caballero (b. 1958), Juan Mayorga (b. 1965), Ignacio del Moral (b. 1957) and Antonio Onetti (b. 1962). Heras also presented the work of companies from around Spain, such as the Centro Dramático de Extremadura, Centro Dramático Galego, Goliardos, Mal Pelo, Moma Teatre, El Teatro Fronterizo and La Zaranda. Although

21 Maria M. Delgado, *'Other' Spanish Theatres: Erasure and Inscription on the Twentieth-Century Spanish Stage* (Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 201–2.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 184.

23 Guillermo Heras, *Escritos dispersos (Centro Nacional de Nuevas Tendencias Escénicas 1998–1994)* (Madrid: CNNTE, 1994), p. 11.

there were scant opportunities for the playwrights of earlier (realist and symbolist) generations to make their way into the programming at the Sala Olimpia, Heras did rescue a play by Agustín Gómez-Arcos (1933–98) – censored by the regime and self-exiled in France – with the premiere of *Interview de Mrs Muerta Smith por sus fantasmas* (Mrs Muerta Smith's Interview with her Phantoms, 1972) under the direction of Carme Portaceli (b. 1957) in 1991. The influential and groundbreaking adventure that was CNNTE ended in 1994, during the decline of the PSOE government and the corresponding budgetary crisis. The Sala Olimpia was, once again, incorporated into the CDN.

When the Partido Popular (PP), under the leadership of Prime Minister José María Aznar, assumed power in Spain in 1996, the new Minister of Education, Culture and Sport, Esperanza Aguirre, named Juan Carlos Pérez de la Fuente (b. 1959) artistic director of the CDN. The members of the PP government arrived on the cultural scene with the goal of accentuating the role of the theatre as a public service; yet, at the same time, they appeared to frown upon what they considered to be the excessive 'interventionism' of the state, especially with regard to the public funding of productions that would be seen by few. The economic crisis had become increasingly pronounced in the realm of the theatre, and the PP consequently placed emphasis on fomenting large commercial successes. The lines between public and private funding were beginning to blur, with joint ventures and co-productions emerging between the INAEM and private corporations, but dissatisfaction with such mergers produced a lack of confidence in the system of government subventions and a lack of artistic innovation in publicly funded productions.²⁴

Pérez de la Fuente's first staged work at the CDN was *Nostalgia del paraíso* (Nostalgia for Paradise, 1996), a theatre piece comprised of texts by Antonio Gala (b. 1936). Remaining at the CDN until 2004, Pérez de la Fuente would go on to stage and programme at the Teatro María Guerrero plays by Francisco Nieva, Antonio Buero Vallejo (1916–2000), Fernando Arrabal (b. 1932) and Max Aub (1903–72). His programming choices thus reflected his own particular preoccupation with Spanish cultural heritage

24 Oliva, *La última escena*, pp. 188–90; Juan Antonio Hormigón, 'Breve diagnosis sobre la situación del teatro español actual', *ADE-Teatro*, 50–1 (April–June 1996), 14–23.

and with recovering the work of living playwrights who previously had limited access to the CDN.²⁵ The presence of cutting-edge international companies lessened in favour of a theatre that, by contemporary standards, was more familiar, aesthetically conservative or mainstream. A second smaller stage, the Sala de la Princesa, was introduced on the same site in 2003, with a seating capacity for 120 spectators.

When the PSOE, under the leadership of Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, returned to power in 2004, Minister of Culture Carmen Calvo appointed Gerardo Vera (b. 1947) artistic director of the CDN. At that time, the INAEM, in conjunction with Madrid's City Council, had already begun, in 1999, the task of renovating the Sala Olimpia as part of a plan to revive the historic neighbourhood of Lavapiés. The Olimpia reopened in 2006 as the newly christened Teatro Valle-Inclán with a seating capacity of 510. A second stage, the Sala Francisco Nieva, with 150 seats, was constructed on the same site. The Valle-Inclán launched its first season with an award-winning production by Vera of Mayorga's adaptation of Valle-Inclán's *Divinas palabras* (Divine Words). The production went on to garner praise at the 2007 Lincoln Center Festival in New York City.²⁶ Under Vera's direction, seasons at the CDN have included works by international figures such as Lars Norén/Thomas Ostermeier, Romeo Castellucci/Societas Raffaello Sanzio and Jo Strømgren, as well as Lluïsa Cunillé (b. 1961), Rodrigo García (b. 1964) and Francisco Nieva. Ernesto Caballero was appointed artistic director of the CDN in 2011.

Numerous arrangements and accords have allowed the INAEM of Spain, the Community of Madrid and the municipal government of Madrid to engage in collaborative projects. The publicly funded Teatro Español, which in 1980 was returned to the city of Madrid (its historic owner), was renovated and reopened in 2006. As of 2007, the Español has also developed contemporary dramaturgy and experimental performance in a series of renovated warehouses, known as the Naves del Español, situated within El Matadero, a cultural centre whose name refers to its origins on the site of a former slaughterhouse. The space was conceived by the municipal government in consultation with Mario Gas (b. 1947), artistic director of the Teatro Español since 2004, and

25 Juan Carlos Pérez de la Fuente, 'Centro Dramático Nacional', *ADE-Teatro*, 54–5 (October–December 1996), 11–19.

26 Wilborn Hampton, 'Unrelenting Bleakness and Outrage, With No Mitigating Circumstances', *New York Times* (28 July 2007).

Frenchman Jean Guy Lecat, whose expertise in theatrical design has left an imprint on several European locales.

The Community of Madrid, moreover, has its own network of performance spaces; in particular, the Teatros del Canal, a theatre complex designed by architect Juan Navarro Baldeweg, which opened in 2009 with three contiguous spaces. Also noteworthy is the Teatro de la Abadía, which, like the Teatre Lliure in Barcelona, is a member of the Union des Théâtres de l'Europe, the organisation founded in 1990 by Jack Lang and Giorgio Strehler. Occupying the old Church of the Sagrada Familia since 1995, the Abadía operates under the auspices of the Community of Madrid, but it is managed by a private foundation that is headed by artistic director José Luis Gómez. Gómez and his artistic team have conceived the Abadía as an experimental theatre laboratory.

Perhaps where the intersection between public and private funding is most evident is within the context of the *salas alternativas* (alternative venues) that are situated throughout Spain. These small ovens of creativity, whose conception and administration are independent of the larger public theatre projects, have operating budgets that are often composed of a combination of both public and private subsidies. In Madrid, the network of Salas Alternativas includes the Sala Cuarta Pared, the Teatro Pradillo, and the Sala Triángulo, spaces that have helped spawn the work of artists of international renown such as Rodrigo García (see Fig. 22) and Juan Mayorga (see Fig. 28, p. 483), whose work is now habitually showcased at the CDN. They represent one of the ways through which public subsidy has helped to engender a certain degree of aesthetic daring and risk within the context of the performing arts.

Catalonia

The presence of the Catalan language as a vehicle of theatrical expression has continued to hold symbolic value as a crucial marker of identity and a vindication of Catalan culture. For many contemporary Catalan dramatists and theatre practitioners, innately conscious of the oppressive realities of the past, the linguistic distinction appears to have taken precedence over all other thematic or aesthetic indicators of national identity. To write and/or stage a play in Catalan is, in effect, to inscribe and reclaim a specific cultural space. The renovation of Catalan theatrical life in democratic times entailed the construction and restoration of theatrical infrastructures in Barcelona (and, more broadly, Catalonia) whose existence had been thwarted by the dictatorship. It also included the remodelling of



Figure 22. From the alternative theatre to the international festival circuit: Rodrigo García's *Gólgota picnic* at the Centro Dramático Nacional, 2011.

non-theatrical spaces and the recovery of locales that had been transformed into cinemas. The year immediately following Franco's death in 1975 represented a key moment, in that it marked the establishment of the *Assemblea d'Actors i Directors* (Standing Conference of Actors and Directors). With its creation, the Catalan stage began to recover the professional legitimacy and visibility that it had been previously denied, improve working conditions for theatre professionals and plan for the future. Inspired by European models that included Jean Vilar's *Théâtre National Populaire* and Strehler's *Piccolo Teatro di Milano*, Catalan theatre professionals during the democratic transition were motivated by a utopian and egalitarian view of the theatre as a public service.²⁷ They did not regard culture as a luxury; instead, it was considered a necessity for ensuring the overall well-being of society.²⁸ It was with these concerns in mind that the *Assemblea* launched an appeal in 1976 for the creation of a *Teatre de Barcelona*, a *Teatre de Catalunya* and a *Llei del Teatre* (Theatre Law). Although these demands were initially denied, the *Assemblea* did succeed in inciting public debate and establishing, that same year, the *Grec* summer

27 Jordi Coca, 'Vint-i-cinc anys del Grec', *Avui* (25 June 2000), p. 35.

28 Lluís Pasqual, *Projecte Ciutat del Teatre*, June 1999, www.ciutateatre.com.

festival under the auspices of the Barcelona municipal government.²⁹ Shortly after the creation of the first Assemblea, an alternative group with more progressive political tendencies broke away to form the Assemblea de Treballadors de l'Espectacle (Standing Conference of Theatre Workers). Its activities were based at Barcelona's Saló Diana until 1979, and it is still remembered for its stunning production of Zorrilla's classic Romantic work *Don Juan Tenorio* at the historic Born Market in November 1976.³⁰

The year 1976 also marked the creation of the Teatre Lliure, Catalonia's most stable, accomplished and distinguished repertory company. The Lliure, whose origins can be traced to a series of early experiments carried out by the Barcelona company Teatre de l'Escorpí, was founded by Lluís Pasqual, Pere Planella (b. 1948), Fabià Puigserver (1938–91) and Carlota Soldevila (1929–2005) as 'Un teatre privat amb vocació de teatre públic'³¹ (A private collective with public aspirations). Its original performance space, still in use, is located in the Gràcia district of Barcelona in a late nineteenth-century building that once belonged to the Catalan workers' cooperative La Lleialtat.³² Faithful to its name and to its establishment during the democratic transition, the Lliure – both the building and the resident company – has stood since its beginnings as an emblem of freedom of expression, a vindication of Catalan-language theatre productions, and a laboratory for experimentation. Its unique view of the creative process has emphasised the notion of artisanship, as opposed to authorship, in its innovative interpretations of classic plays drawn from an international repertoire. The Lliure has functioned as a formative training ground for many members of the Barcelona theatre profession, yet it has also been a site of contention. During the late 1970s, for example, the theatre was criticised by several Catalan dramatists for privileging the so-called 'universal' repertoire rather than encouraging the creation of original Catalan-language plays.³³

29 Enric Gallén, 'Catalan Theatrical Life', in David George and John London (eds.), *Contemporary Catalan Theatre: An Introduction* (Sheffield: Anglo-Catalan Society, 1996), pp. 19–42 (pp. 30–2); Coca, 'Vint-i-cinc anys', p. 35.

30 Antoni Bartomeus, *Els autors del teatre català: Testimoni d'una marginació* (Barcelona: Curial, 1976).

31 Pasqual, *Projecte Ciutat del Teatre*.

32 Emili Teixidor, 'Petita història dels primers deu anys del Lliure', in *Teatre Lliure: 1976/1986* (Barcelona: Teatre Lliure/Institut del Teatre de la Diputació de Barcelona, 1987), pp. 11–21.

33 See, for example, Benet i Jornet, *Material d'endarroc* (Barcelona: Edicions 62, 2010); Rodolf Sirera, 'Les misèries de l'autor teatral', *Serra d'Or* (December 1977), 101–3.

In 1988, the Lliure became a public entity called the Fundació Teatre Lliure—Teatre Públic de Barcelona, with the support of the Barcelona municipal government. In 1989, it became a founding member of the Union of the Theatres of Europe. That same year, through the perseverance of Puigserver, the Barcelona City Council pledged to support the creation of a world-class theatre space: plans were begun to renovate the Palau d'Agricultura, an historic *noucentista* (classicalist) building situated along the slope of Montjuïc, originally constructed for the Barcelona International Exposition of 1929.³⁴ During the late 1990s, the Ajuntament (City Council) and Diputació (provincial council) also began converting the lower part of Montjuïc into the Ciutat del Teatre, a multi-space 'theatre city' that would contain the new Lliure, along with the Mercat de les Flors (specialising in international productions of theatre and dance), the Teatre Grec, and the new headquarters of the Institut del Teatre de la Diputació de Barcelona (the conservatoire of theatre and dance). Motivated by cultural-political aspirations to transform Barcelona into a European theatre capital, the Generalitat and Spain's central government also provided funding for the new Lliure and the Ciutat del Teatre, creating a complex political situation that placed the project in the hands of four different government administrations.

In 1997, Pasqual returned to Barcelona from his position as director of the Théâtre de l'Odéon in Paris to coordinate the Ciutat del Teatre project and to serve as artistic director of the new Lliure. He had been one of the creative drivers behind the early Lliure, yet the theatre was hit by a series of financial dilemmas and administrative clashes that led him to announce, during the summer of 2000, his departure from the project. Despite the difficulties, the Palau de l'Agricultura did finally undergo a spectacular transformation into the Lliure de Montjuïc. The 800-seat Teatre Fabià Puigserver (inaugurated in November 2001) boasts a state-of-the-art modular stage, while the 200-seat Espai Lliure (inaugurated in February 2002) served as a studio space until its conversion into a rehearsal room in 2010.

In March 2003, following the death of Pasqual's successor, Josep Montanyès, in 2002, Àlex Rigola (b. 1969) was named Artistic Director of the Lliure. Through his imaginative international programming and his work with a multifaceted artistic team, Rigola left a significant imprint

34 On Puigserver, see Guillem-Jordi Graells and Antoni Bueso, *Fabià Puigserver* (Barcelona: Diputació de Barcelona, 1996); Guillem-Jordi Graells and Giorgio Ursini Ursic (eds.), *Fabià Puigserver: Scénographe*, trans. Gérard Richet and Myriam Tanant (Paris: Union des Théâtres de l'Europe, 1995).

upon all three spaces of the theatre (the Gràcia space was renovated and reopened in 2010). His own cutting-edge productions were known to draw upon multiple contemporary European influences, including the work of German director Thomas Ostermeier. Rigola, furthermore, opened the doors of the Lliure to Catalan dramatists to an unprecedented degree, creating residencies for local artists and assuming the task of cultivating and commissioning the work of playwrights and choreographers such as Lluïsa Cunillé, Cesc Gelabert (b. 1953) and Pau Miró. When Rigola's term ended in 2011, Pasqual returned as artistic director, and the history of the Lliure finally came full circle.

Following the eradication of Francoist censorship in 1977 and the passage of the Catalan Statute of Autonomy of 1979, the Catalan theatre profession was finally able to fulfil its long-standing aspiration of creating a national drama centre. The Centre Dramàtic de la Generalitat de Catalunya (CDGC) was established by the autonomous government in 1979, designed to give a firm institutional foothold to the national repertoire and to the creation and dissemination of new Catalan plays. The CDGC was befittingly housed in Barcelona's Teatre Romea, the historic space that had once served as the cradle of the modern Catalan stage. After a brief period in which the CDGC was under the stewardship of theatre historian Xavier Fàbregas (1931–85), actor/director Hermann Bonnín (b. 1935) became its artistic director in 1982. Domènec Reixach (b. 1948), who began his career as an actor, replaced Bonnín in 1988, and his appointment, as Enric Gallén notes, brought about a shift towards the deliberate promotion of contemporary Catalan drama. During his tenure at the CDGC, Reixach programmed writers from earlier decades, while also creating a myriad of opportunities and incentives for young and/or up-and-coming Catalan dramatists, such as Sergi Belbel (b. 1963) and Lluïsa Cunillé.³⁵

As the CDGC was beginning to take shape, Max Cahner, Cultural Minister of the Generalitat, began discussions with Josep Maria Flotats (b. 1939), a Catalan actor/director, who had approached him about the creation of a national theatre. Flotats had been living and working in France for several decades and had ties to the Comédie-Française. In 1984, the Generalitat granted Flotats the opportunity to direct his own eponymous company. The experience was to serve, in a sense, as a practice run for what would become a national theatre. The Companyia Flotats was based

35 Gallén, 'Catalan Theatrical Life', pp. 32–4.



Figure 23. Main façade of the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya © Ferran Mateo/TNC

at the Teatre Poliorama and subsidised by the Catalan government. Flotats would remain there until 1994. By that time, the Generalitat had approved his proposal for the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya; in 1995, it appointed him 'Director-Fundador' (Founding Director) of the TNC.

The TNC, an imposing edifice conceived by Catalan architect Ricardo Bofill, was constructed near the Plaça de les Glòries, on the newly created Plaça de les Arts, adjacent to the national concert hall known as the Auditori Nacional de Catalunya and the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya (the conservatoire of music) (see Fig. 23). The TNC complex contains three performance spaces: the 900-seat Sala Gran, the 300-seat Sala Petita and the 400-seat Sala Tallers. Flotats had delineated his plans for the theatre in a brief précis titled *Un projecte per al Teatre Nacional* (1989), published with prefaces by Catalan president Jordi Pujol and Barcelona mayor Pasqual Maragall. In it he attempted to elucidate his concept of the TNC as a public-service enterprise necessary for the expression of Catalan cultural identity.³⁶ The proposal, as Helena Buffery has observed, contains 'different and opposing discourses and aesthetics, drawing primarily on the French national theatre projects of Vilar and Vitez but also harkens back to the Wagnerian ideals underlying early twentieth-century visions of a future for Catalan theatre'.³⁷

36 Josep Maria Flotats, *Un projecte per al Teatre Nacional*, Prefaces Jordi Pujol and Pasqual Maragall, Introduction Max Cahner (Barcelona: Edicions de la Revista de Catalunya, 1989), p. 25.

37 Helena Buffery, 'Theater Space and Cultural Identity in Catalonia', *Romance Quarterly*, 53.3 (Summer 2006), 195–209 (p. 199).

Flotats' apparent preference for international, rather than Catalan, drama provoked resistance among sectors of the Barcelona theatre community. Such concerns peaked when Flotats announced his decision to launch the first (pre-inaugural) season of programming at the TNC with North-American dramatist Tony Kushner's *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* (1991). The outrage had not subsided by 1997 when Flotats announced that the 'official' inauguration of the Sala Gran of the TNC would take place on 11 September (Catalonia's national day) with the *mise-en-scène* of a Catalan classic, *L'auca del senyor Esteve* (The Tale of Mr Esteve) by Santiago Rusiñol (1861–1931). The production was regarded by some to be a safe – even amusingly obvious – selection. That Flotats chose director Adolfo Marsillach, a Catalan who had built much of his career in Madrid, to stage the play did not inspire widespread favour.

Shortly after the 'official' inauguration of the theatre in the autumn of 1997, Catalan cultural minister Joan Maria Pujals asked Flotats to vacate his position as director of the TNC, effective from July 1998, a contributing factor in his dismissal being Flotats' unwillingness to follow the officially dictated government standards of devoting a portion of the TNC's programming to the work of Catalan companies. Reixach, artistic director of the CDGC, was subsequently appointed to replace him.³⁸ The CDGC, as a result, was dissolved in 1998, when the presence of both this institution and the TNC was deemed to be redundant. In the aftermath of the 'Flotats Affair', the Teatre Romea shifted into the private hands of the newly created *Fundació Romea per a les Arts Escèniques* and Focus, a production company with a large stake in the commercial theatre sector, with the polemical director Calixto Bieito (b. 1963) as artistic director until 2010.

Reixach presided over the TNC until July 2006, when playwright-director Sergi Belbel relieved him in his role as artistic director. During his eight years at the helm of the TNC, Reixach, along with a carefully chosen advisory board, programmed seasons that emphasised Catalan theatre and dance, along with the presence of international artists and companies, such as Heiner Goebbels and Pina Bausch. In 2002, the TNC launched a project

38 Jacinto Antón, 'Domènec Reixach, Director del Teatre Nacional: El TNC debe empezar ya a respirar normalidad y no morbo', *El País* (18 July 1998), p. 26; Marcos Ordóñez 'No entenc res', *Avui* (17 November 1997). This is not to say that Reixach's stewardship and programming decisions have not been subject to public critiques by notable cultural figures, including Jordi Coca and directors Joan Ollé and Ricard Salvat.

known as 'T6', under the supervision of Belbel, with the intention of nurturing and staging the work of approximately six young dramatists and directors per year, mainly from Catalonia. Jordi Galceran (b. 1964), who was part of the first crop of playwrights to take part in the T6 workshops, is an example of its success. His *El mètode Gronhölhm* (The Gronhölhm Method) premiered under Belbel's direction at the Sala Tallers in 2003 and went on to the Teatre Poliorama during 2004, where it enjoyed a run that lasted for three seasons and a level of commercial success unsurpassed by any Catalan playwright of his generation.³⁹ Belbel, in his role as artistic director, has continued the process of safeguarding the Catalan theatrical patrimony and of cultivating the work of contemporary Catalan dramatists. In addition, he has begun to create new collaborative relationships between the 'T6' programme and several smaller, alternative theatre venues.⁴⁰

During the decade of 2000, the Generalitat began to move towards decentralising the Catalan theatrical landscape, creating new institutions located beyond Barcelona through cooperative pacts and agreements with local governments. These include the Centre d'Arts Escèniques de Reus, EL CANAL Centre d'Art Escèniques de Salt/Girona, and the Centres d'Arts Escèniques de Terrassa. In 2008, the Generalitat approved the establishment of the Consell Nacional de la Cultura i de les Arts (CONCA, or National Council on Culture and the Arts), modelled on the arts councils that exist in many Anglo-Saxon countries, and dedicated to keeping the theatre scene free from the uncertainties of political change.⁴¹

Valencia

During the dictatorship, the anti-Francoist independent theatre movement took hold in Valencia in significant and promising ways with the creation of several groups and collectives that include El Rogle, Grup 49 de Teatre, L'Horta, Pluja Teatre and Uevo. Actors, directors and playwrights such as

39 "El mètode Grönholm" baja el telón tras tres años de éxito en el Poliorama', *La Vanguardia* (15 June 2007). A simultaneous premiere took place in Madrid in Spanish, under the direction of Tamzin Townsend at the Teatro Marquina (with Carlos Hipólito, Cristina Marcos, Jorge Roelas and Elezar Ortiz), where it ran for over two seasons.

40 See 'Domènec Reixach deja el TNC con ocupación equilibrada en las tres salas', *La Vanguardia* (29 June 2006).

41 'Llei 6/2008, del 13 de maig, del Consell Nacional de la Cultura i de les Arts. Barcelona, Departament de la Presidència, Generalitat de Catalunya' (May 2008).

Manel Cubedo (b. 1955), Antonio Díaz Zamora (b. 1941), Juli Leal (b. 1946), Teresa Lozano (b. 1944), Manuel Molins (b. 1946), Josep Lluís Sirera (b. 1954) and Rodolf Sirera (b. 1948) drafted plans for a network of public theatres and institutions, some of which were brought to fruition.⁴² Indeed, Valencia has had a challenging history with regard to its cultural politics and the creation of public theatre projects and institutions. If dramatist Rodolf Sirera's experimental 'biographic symphony' *Plany a la mort d'Enric Ribera* (Lament for the Death of Enric Ribera, written in 1972, premiered in 1977) had served as a vehicle for expressing his preoccupations with issues of Valencian identity and theatre during the final years of the dictatorship, in retrospect the play stands as a premonitory reflection of anxieties about the future of the Valencian stage.

The complex political-linguistic conditions that have characterised the cultural backdrop of this community have revealed impediments with regard to the creation of a national drama centre and the survival of Valencian-language theatre. The situation was chronicled in 1981 by essayist Josep Lluís Sirera (brother and frequent collaborator of Rodolf) in his *Passat, present i futur del teatre valencià*, in which he offered his vision of Valencian theatrical reality and proposed the creation of a national theatre.⁴³ Both Sirera brothers have been protagonists in many of the efforts to professionalise the Valencia theatre scene, create a national drama centre in accordance with European models and construct publicly backed opportunities for Valencian theatrical life in democratic times.

During the democratic period, the Diputació (provincial council) of Valencia, in social-democratic hands as a result of the first municipal elections of 1979, was given charge of two theatres, the first of which was the Teatre Principal. Often referred to by Valencians as 'el nostre primer coliseu' (our first coliseum), the Principal is the oldest theatre in the city, dating from the eighteenth century.⁴⁴ Two artistic directors were appointed to the Principal beginning in 1979: Rodolf Sirera and Armando

42 Ramon X. Rosselló, 'Sobre el teatre independent valencià i la nova escriptura teatral', *Caplletra*, 22 (Spring 1997), 217–32.

43 Josep Lluís Sirera, *Passat, present i futur del teatre valencià* (Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 1981).

44 Josep Lluís Sirera, *El Teatre Principal de València: Aproximació a la seua història* (Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim/Institució Valenciana d'Estudis i Investigació, 1986).

Moreno (1919–94).⁴⁵ The second public theatre administered by the Diputació was the Sala Escalante. Named for local playwright Eduard Escalante (1834–95), it was placed in the hands of artistic director Joan Vicent Cubedo in 1980. These theatres, beginning in 1981, were known as the Teatres de la Diputació, and Rodolf Sirera was appointed to oversee their activities until 1984. The first production presented during this new period was a Valencian Catalan adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea* in 1981 at the Teatre Principal. That same year, Manuel Molins staged his own *Quatre històries d'amor per a la reina germana* (Four Love Stories for the Sister Queen, 1981) at the Sala Escalante, a co-production with the theatre company Grup 49. The Sala Escalante eventually would become the Centre Teatral Escalante, devoted principally to children's theatre.

On a national level, the Conselleria de Cultura (Ministry of Culture of the Generalitat Valenciana, the autonomous government of Valencia) created, in 1979, the Servei de Teatre, Música i Cinematografia (Theatre, Music and Cinematography Service), which was responsible for overseeing festivals and grants for the performing arts, as well as the so-called Circuit Teatral Valencià (Valencian Theatre Circuit), a network of theatres throughout the Valencian territory. Participants in the project included Joan Vicent Cubedo, Antonio Díaz Zamora and Rodolf Sirera. Sirera was appointed director of the Servei de Teatre, Música i Cinematografia in 1984 and held this position until 1988. He subsequently created an advisory council whereby he attempted to bring together representatives from various theatre sectors. Its objectives included the production and exhibition of government-subsidised theatre productions, as well as co-productions between the Servei and the private sector, the creation of incentives for theatre research, the recruitment and training of professionals in the performing arts, and the promotion and expansion of theatrical offerings.

The Valencian Statute of Autonomy was passed in 1982, giving the community a measure of self-governance. The Generalitat Valenciana remained in the hands of social democrats between 1982 and 1995, and

45 See Ramon X. Rossello, 'El teatro valenciano de la democracia (o los vaivenes de lo público)', *ADE-Teatro*, 75 (April–June 1999), 42–6; Alfred Mayordomo, 'Al voltant del teatre públic valencià: El Centre Dramàtic de la Generalitat Valenciana', in Ramon X. Rosselló (ed.), *Aproximació al teatre valencià actual, 1968–1998* (Valencia: Universitat de València, Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana, 2000), pp. 141–76.

policies with regard to theatre continued to stem specifically from the Conselleria de Cultura. They included plans for the creation of a Centre Dramàtic de la Generalitat Valenciana (CDGV, or Drama Centre of the Government of Valencia), followed by plans for the Teatres de la Generalitat, a Valencian theatre network. The CDGV was finally constituted in an official sense in 1985, under the auspices of the Conselleria de Cultura. That same year, the CDGV, still in need of a physical space, acquired as a future site the Rialto Cinema, situated in a central location on the Plaça de l'Adjuntament. The Rialto, which would come to comprise two theatres, the Sala Rialto and the Sala Moratín, would also become the site of the Generalitat's Filmoteca (film institute).

The year 1986 also marked the creation of the Institut Valencià de les Arts Escèniques, Cinematografia i Música (IVAECM, or Valencian Institute of Performing Arts, Cinema and Music), which would serve as a parallel institution with respect to the INAEM in Madrid. The CDGV project was placed under the auspices of the IVAECM, and Antonio Díaz Zamora was appointed its first director. In March 1988, the renovated Teatre Rialto of the CDGV opened with the premiere of Valle-Inclán's *La marquesa Rosalinda* (The Marquise Rosalinda), under the direction of Argentine Alfredo Arias (b. 1944). The first artistic director of the new centre was Díaz Zamora.

The second phase in the evolution of the CDGV occurred between 1989 and 1993, with artistic director Antonio Tordera at the helm. He formed a new, more artistically energetic production team and began opening the doors of the centre to Valencian theatre and dance companies, while striking a balance between international directors and local artists. The CDGV launched a publication series, and Rodolf Sirera and Manuel Molins had the opportunity to present their works at the centre. During the 1994–95 season, the centenary of Eduard Escalante motivated a cycle devoted to contemporary Valencian authors. This included a large-scale production at the Rialto of *Tres forasters de Madrid* (Three Strangers from Madrid), under the direction of Spanish film director Luis García Berlanga (1921–2010), which was based on an adaptation by the Sirera brothers of a series of brief *sainetes* (one-act farces) by Escalante. In addition, the Teatre Principal was subsumed by IVAECM during this phase.

The momentum of what had seemed a dynamic beginning, nevertheless, began to change in 1993, a year of significant restructuring that included the dissolution of the IVAECM and the creation of a new network

of theatres known as the Teatres de la Generalitat Valenciana (TGV) to oversee all activities related to theatre and dance throughout the community. The PP won the local elections of 1995, and the shift to the political right brought some unwelcome changes, including the appointments of bureaucrats who, in the eyes of many theatre professionals, had not earned their positions. The term of the first director, Miguel Ángel Conejero, from September 1995 to February 1996, was so disastrous that the theatre profession organised collectively to demand his resignation. Juan Alfonso Gil Albers replaced him.

Today the TGV operates under the auspices of the Àrea d'Arts Plàstiques i Escèniques (Area of Plastic and Performing Arts), a division of the Valencia Conselleria de Cultura i Esport (Ministry of Culture and Sport). It is composed of the Teatre Principal, the Teatre Rialto, the Sala Moratín and the Teatre Talia in Valencia, as well as the Sala Arniches in Alicante and the Teatre del Raval in Castelló. Aesthetic conservatism and commercial interests have predominated since the early 1990s in the programming of these venues. The TGV also oversees the various festivals and showcases for new work, such as the Mostra de Teatre Valencià in Alcoi and the Mostra de Autors Contemporànies in Alacant. The summer festival Sagunt a Escena – a showcase for outdoor productions including classical theatre, Shakespeare, and dance, held at the historic Roman amphitheatre in the coastal town of Sagunt (whose renovations were completed in 1994) – also operates under its supervision.

The late 1980s and 1990s saw a strong resurgence of theatrical writing in the Valencian Catalan language. Playwrights Pasqual Alapont (b. 1963), Carles Alberola (b. 1964), Chema Cardeña (b. 1963), Roberto García (b. 1968), Rafael González (b. 1966), Alejandro Jornet (b. 1956), Manuel Molins (b. 1946), Carles Pons (b. 1955), Paco Sanguino (b. 1964) and Paco Zarzoso (b. 1966) are just some of the new names to emerge on the Valencian theatre scene, and many of them would develop, as a result of shared linguistic and creative interests, fruitful ties with Barcelona and the neighbouring Catalan theatre scene. During this period, director Carles Alfaro (b. 1960) and his Valencian company Moma Teatre, in existence in the city from 1982 to 2004, received recognition throughout Spain for their productions of Pinter and Camus. Carles Alberola and Toni Benavent (b. 1961), with early ties to Moma and to the independent theatre groups, founded the widely acclaimed company Albena Teatre in 1994. The operatic spectacles of Valencian director-composer-pianist Carles Santos

(b. 1940) have offered a surrealistic blend of the sacred and the profane. Many of these artists and companies, in addition to the theatres in which they have staged their works, have received public subsidies, but such support has been progressively decreasing. Moma Teatre's Espai Moma was forced to close because of budgetary woes in 2004; it reopened later that year as L'Altre Espai, an alternative space that was funded by the TGV, but, lacking sustained public support, the theatre closed its doors definitively in 2009.

While many of the above-cited infrastructures are impressive on a physical scale (including Santiago Calatrava's dazzling helmet-like 2006 opera house, part of the Ciutat de les Arts i de les Ciències [City of Arts and Sciences]), programming strategies are often unclear and seemingly arbitrary, and progress has been hampered by budgetary dilemmas. Despite the widespread creativity that exists on the part of the above-mentioned artists, Valencian-language theatre has found itself increasingly marginalised. As Rodolf Sirera notes, even during the period in which the socialists were in power, there was never a clear policy in support of the creation of theatre in Valencian Catalan, whether original autochthonous works or translated texts. Language and the Castilianisation of the Valencian stage is a problem, he goes on to state, for if the Valencian government chooses to renounce any sort of commitment to its own language and culture, then public theatre in Valencia will lose one of its main reasons for existence.⁴⁶

Basque Country

In the Basque Country, the consciousness of a national theatre has its roots in popular oral tradition, in paratheatrical forms such as *bertsolarismo* (improvised oral poetry) and *mascaradas* (carnavalesque performances incorporating masks), and above all in the pastorals that still prevail today.⁴⁷ Yet perhaps its institutional confirmation had its origin in the period prior to the Civil War, when in San Sebastián the Euskal Iztundea company was created under the direction of Toribio Alzaga, and a

46 Rodolf Sirera, 'Producción pública y lengua', *ADE-Teatro*, 75 (April–June 1999), p. 88.

47 Patricio Urkizu, *Historia de la literatura vasca* (Madrid: UNED, 2000), p. 78. On Basque theatre, see Patricio Urkizu's *Historia del teatro vasco* (San Sebastián: Orain, 1996); *Teatro vasco: Historia, reseñas and entrevistas, antología bilingüe, catálogo e ilustraciones* (Madrid: UNED, 2009). *Primer Acto* has devoted two monographic issues to Basque theatre: 216 (1986), 52–98; 268 (1997), 6–126.

company of *cómicos de la legua* (touring actors) was formed in Vizcaya by Manu Sota (1897–1979) and Esteban Urkiaga ‘Lauaxeta’ (1905–37), who considered the theatre to be the most appropriate vehicle for the promotion of the Basque language. Theatre had a political profile during the Franco years, as is evident in the work of Pierre Larzabal (1915–88), his disciple Daniel Landart (b. 1946) and, in the 1970s, Bernardo Atxaga (b. 1951). Among the manifestos in favour of a Basque theatre, the one signed by Atxaga in 1974, ‘Euskal Theatro Berria(ren bila)’ (In search of a New Basque Theatre) stands out, advocating a mixture of the popular and the avant-garde. Between 1960 and 1972, San Sebastián was an important centre for theatre activity in the Basque Country, although its commercial venues (the Principal, Príncipe, Trueba, Astoria and Victoria Eugenia) eschewed the more independent experiments. The Basque groups that emerged in these years – Akelarre, Geroa, Cómicos de la Legua, Maskarada and Karraka – would be forced to confront the difficulties of maintaining their productions in a circuit dominated by commercial touring companies from Madrid, in addition to political and linguistic censorship, and the absence of institutional support.

Between 1970 and 1990, independent theatre groups (Egi-Billa, Ereintza, Goaz, Arrate, Narruzko Zezen, Intxixu, Oargi, Orain, Taupada, Legaleón T, Tanttaka and Intxurre) multiplied in the province of Guipúzcoa. A number of street theatre troupes also emerged, inspired by similar endeavours in Catalonia.⁴⁸ In 1970, the I Festival Internacional de Teatro (First International Theatre Festival) was celebrated in San Sebastián, inspired by the World Theatre Festival in Nancy, but it was called off after the companies protested the enforced cancellation of three productions; for this reason, it is known today as the Festival Cero del Teatro Independiente (The Zero Festival of the Independent Theatre Movement).

In 1981, the Department of Culture of the Basque government created the Antzerti (Theatre Arts Service of the Basque Country), which, besides having a conservatoire, aspired to become a theatre production centre through the creation of a permanent acting company. During the 1983–4

48 On professional Basque theatre, see Ana Lidia Agra Burgos, *25 años de teatro vasco: La producción escénica en la Comunidad Autónoma Vasca (1975–2000)* (Vitoria: Diputación Foral de Álava, 2002); Juan Aguirre, ‘El Teatro Independiente en Vasconia, 1969–1984’, *Revista de Estudios Vascos*, 51.2 (2006), 335–83; Mikel Azpiazu Zulueta, *Actividad teatral donostiarra (1950–1975)* (San Sebastián: Fundación Kutxa, 2010).

season, the Compañía de Teatro de Euskadi (Theatre Company of the Basque Country) was created, composed of both professional actors and those from the conservatoire. The theatre journal *Antzerti Berezia* (Distinctive Theatre) appeared, and although it was short lived – its final issue was published in 1986 – on the pages of its sixth issue playwright Alfonso Sastre (b. 1926) called for a ‘national’ Basque theatre that would distance itself not only from the Basque obsession with racial purity and rural nostalgia, but also from what he termed Euroamerican cosmopolitanism, offering instead a vehicle for a culture of resistance from the threat of ‘homogeneidad cultural’⁴⁹ (cultural homogeneity).

The *Antzerti* allowed an authentic public debate to begin with regard to Basque theatre. Theatre companies emerged from its conservatoire (Bederen 1, Sakana, Higa, Luar, Maite Agirre and Teatropolitan). Discussions ensued on the existence of theatre circuits, specific grants for Basque-language theatre, the strengthening of educational programmes and the creation of an archive and centre for documentation.⁵⁰ In 1984, the first stable theatre was inaugurated in the Basque Country with Bilbao’s Teatro Albéniz, while the Euskal Antzerti Taldeen Biltzarre (The Federation of Basque Theatre Groups), composed of fifteen companies, initiated a campaign of protest against the *Antzerti*’s lack of coherent plans. Nevertheless, the *Antzerti* staged some notable productions, such as *Troiarrak* (The Trojan Women, 1983) and *Arlekino* (Harlequin, 1983).

The emergence of Artezzena (Public Theatre of Guipúzcoa) marked a new era in Basque theatre. Under the auspices of the Department of Culture of the provincial council of Guipúzcoa, it effectively functioned as the institutional body in charge of the production and exhibition of theatre from 1992. Directed by the members of two different theatre companies, Orain’s Maribel Belástegui and Tanttaka’s Fernando Benués, it ran for three years and was seen by many as a possible embryo for the creation of a Basque national drama centre. Key productions included Schnitzler’s *La cacatúa verde* (The Green Cockatoo, 1993) directed by Mario Gas (b. 1947), the dance piece *Sueños eróticos* (Erotic Dreams, 1994), with choreography by Mar Gómez, Toni Mira and Josu Mujika, and *Mephisto* (1994), directed by Pere Planella. Tanttaka was responsible

49 Urkizu, *Teatro vasco*, p. 208.

50 María del Karmen Gil Fombellida, *El teatro en Guipuzkoa (1970–1986): Apuntes para una historia de las artes escénicas en Euskal Herria* (San Sebastián: Michelena Artes Gráficas, 2004), pp. 96–8.

for Andrés Sopeña Monsalve's *El florido pensil* (The Flourishing Garden, 1994), a study of life in a Catholic school during the dictatorship, which proved an unexpected commercial hit.

In 1995, Eskena (Association of Theatre Production Companies of the Basque Country) was founded to promote theatre and establish a framework for relations with public institutions. Its member companies included Ados Teatroya, Hika Antzerki Taldea, Julio Perugorria Producciones, Kukubiltxo Antzerki Taldea, La Tentación Producciones, Markeliñe, Maskarada, Porpol, Taun Taun, Teatro Paraíso, Traspasos, Txalo and Txamuskina. The Basque network of theatres known as the Red Vasca de Teatros Sarea, again founded in this period, also made a significant contribution to the creation of an adequate infrastructure for the performing arts, giving municipal theatres the necessary technical and economic resources to programme a season of work. While the alternative theatre circuit has not proliferated as in other autonomous communities, Bilbao's La Fundación has proved the exception, with a twenty-five-year history of presenting contemporary performance work.

Some companies have had a presence elsewhere in Spain and internationally. Akelarre, with Luis María Iturri at the helm, received two prizes for *Luces de bohemia* at the II Festival Nacional de Teatro Independiente (Second National Festival of Independent Theatre, 1968). Kilikilariak (Strolling Players), a theatre collective created in Bilbao in 1969, positioned itself within an alternative aesthetic that recognised the influence of the Teatro Campesino, The Living Theatre, Artaud and Grotowski. In 1980 the company dissolved, bringing about the birth of Karraka, whose work was produced predominantly in Spanish, and Maskarada, the first professional Basque group, created with the literary complicity of Bernardo Atxaga. Kilikilariak's *Nafarroa 1500* demonstrated a connection with folkloric paratheatrical traditions, such as carnival. Karraka (1981–95), under the direction of Ramón Barea (b. 1949), had a conspicuous success with the musical comedy *Bilbao, Bilbao* (1984), whose carnivalesque aesthetic was anchored in a *bricolage* of genres and materials such as the American musical, *zarzuela*, cabaret, Chinese shadow plays, soap opera and circus.⁵¹ In this context, *Oficio de Tinieblas 5* (Service

51 Loreta de Stasio, 'El teatro durante la transición en el País Vasco: El tardofranquismo grotesco en *Bilbao, Bilbao*', in José Romera Castillo and Francisco Gutiérrez Carbajo (eds.), *Teatro histórico (1975–1998): Textos y representaciones* (Madrid: Visor), pp. 607–14.

at Dusk) emerged in 1983. An adaptation of the novel by Camilo José Cela (1916–2002), created as a collaborative project between Karraka, Cobaya, Kukubiltxo, Orain and Teatro Estudio, also under the direction of Barea, it enjoyed exposure at Madrid's Festival de Otoño (Autumn Festival) and toured the Basque Country in non-purpose-built spaces.

Geroa, a company based in Durango, developed out of a theatre workshop (Antzerki Eskola) in 1976. Between 1979 and 1997, under the direction of Antonio Malonda (b. 1933), Geroa was one of the most active groups in the Basque theatrical landscape, working both with Basque authors such as Ignacio Amestoy (b. 1947) and on international works by Bertolt Brecht and Dario Fo. Geroa's treatment of *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* was arguably the most widely performed play in the Basque Country during the 1980s and was marked by an interdisciplinary aesthetic that demonstrated the company's commitment to forging relationships with those working outside theatre – as with the painter José Ibarrola and the musician Juan Carlos Irizar. Formed in Vitoria in 1977, the Cooperativa de Producción Teatral Denok received support from the provincial government of Álava to create the Festival Internacional de Teatro (International Theatre Festival). An energising force in the Basque landscape for seven years, its most celebrated production was Francisco Nieva's *El rayo colgado* (The Hanging Lightning Bolt, 1981), directed by Juanjo Granda.

UR Teatro-Antzerkia, the most international of Basque companies, was founded in 1987 under the artistic direction of Helena Pimenta (b. 1955). In 1993, it obtained the National Theatre Prize from the Spanish Ministry of Culture for its adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a production seen by over 300,000 spectators in fourteen countries. Pimenta's many Shakespeare adaptations have left their mark on the theatrical landscape of the Iberian Peninsula. Characterised by rigorous dramaturgical work and an attention to contemporary resonances, their visual elegance (often marked by panels and ramps by designers José Tomé and Susana Uña) has generated copious invitations for Pimenta to direct elsewhere, and her work has been seen across Spain at the CDN, CNTC, TNC and Centro Dramático Galego (CDG).

Andalusia

While Andalusia has been considered as a theme in the work of Federico García Lorca and Rafael Alberti, its theatrical roots are far reaching. During

the Franco era, a political theatre of protest, which was very much intertwined with the *teatro campesino*, was represented by Fausto Velázquez's Teatro Algabeño and, above all, by the Teatro Estudio Lebriano, directed by Juan Bernabé, whose *Oratorio* (Oratory, 1969 and 1971) represented an important milestone for the Andalusian stage, giving way to what has been termed the *flamenquización*⁵² (flamencoisation) of the theatre. It is in this context that the birth of the most international of Andalusian companies, La Cuadra, directed by Salvador Távora (b. 1934), can be situated. Since the late 1960s Távora's trajectory has promoted a non-textual theatre that has sought to dignify *flamenco* culture as a valid artistic and expressive element in performance. Using iconography from the bullfight, the processional marches derived from the Romería del Rocío and the Holy Week celebrations in Seville, Távora has created a performance code of violent, sensuous beauty (see Chapter 18, pp. 383–4).

Other initiatives have also provided further structures for the professionalisation of theatre. The Institut del Teatro de Sevilla (Theatre Conservatoire of Seville) was created in 1981. The Centro Andaluz de Teatro (CAT, or Andalusian Centre for Theatre) followed seven years later, encouraging emerging writers (such as Antonio Onetti [b. 1962], Alfonso Zurro [b. 1953] and Juan García Larrondo [b. 1965]).⁵³ As well as promoting Andalusian dramaturgy, the CAT sought to provide incentives for 'quality' productions, created spaces for teaching and workshops, and supported initiatives that might broaden the expectations and cultural references of local audiences.

As César Oliva points out, the beginnings of the CAT were characterised by a tendency to finance co-productions with theatre companies having a distinctive language of their own.⁵⁴ The CAT's first production, which premiered at Seville's Teatro Lope de Vega in 1989, was *Los caminos de Federico* (Federico's Paths), directed by Lluís Pasqual. The directors of the CAT have included Roberto García Quintana (1988–92), Manuel Llanes (1992–5), Juan Ruesga (1995–7), Emilio Hernández (1997–2003) and

52 Óscar Cornago Bernal, *La vanguardia teatral en España (1965–1975): Del ritual al juego* (Madrid: Visor, 2000), p. 112.

53 See 1988–2003: *15 años del Centro Andaluz de Teatro* (Seville: Junta de Andalucía, 2003) and Juan Antonio Hormigón, 'El teatro en Andalucía', in *ADE-Teatro*, 54–5 (1996), 23–107.

54 Oliva, *La última escena*, p. 126.

Francisco Ortuño Millán (2003 to the present). Hernández (b. 1948) and Ortuño (b. 1961) have given the programming a more Andalusian slant and offered incentives to encourage developing playwrights, as with the Romero Esteo Prize.⁵⁵ Like the National Theatre of Scotland, the CAT still does not have its own physical home, but its productions, which regularly tour through Andalusia, usually involve dates at the three public venues run by the Junta de Andalucía (the Government of Andalusia): the Central, Cánovas and Alhambra theatres. Furthermore, the proliferation of theatrical spaces has allowed for both more adventurous organisations of audience/actor relationships and a broader frame for performance events. The refurbishment of certain 'established' theatres, as with Almería's Apolo, Cadiz's Gran Teatro Falla, Cordoba's Gran Teatro, Granada's Teatro Isabel la Católica, Huelva's Gran Teatro and Seville's Lope de Vega, has been accompanied by the inauguration of new spaces in Seville (Teatro Central, Teatro de la Cartuja and Teatro Maestranza) and Huelva (Foro Iberoamericano de la Rábida), as well as an ever-expanding circuit of *salas alternativas*, as with Malaga's Sala Cánovas, Cadiz's Central Lechera, Jaén's Teatro Xtremo and Seville's Salas Endanza. There are currently three theatre conservatories, or Escuelas Superiores de Arte Dramático, in Andalusia (in Seville, Malaga and Cordoba). In association with the CAT, the Centro de Documentación de las Artes Escénicas de Andalucía (Centre for Documentation of the Performing Arts in Andalusia) offers an archival home for materials relating to Andalusian theatre.

The trajectories of a number of key companies who have pursued distinctive aesthetic journeys are worth underscoring here. Axioma, founded in Almería in 1973 and directed by Carlos Góngora (b. 1953), has carried out significant experimental work with street puppet theatre. Seville-based Atalaya, founded by Ricardo Iniesta (b. 1956) in 1983, has managed to create an inventive style that draws on Barba, Grotowski and Meyerhold and the gestural vocabularies of Asian performance traditions.⁵⁶ Iniesta defines Atalaya's theatre as a confluence of the oneiric, the grotesque and the epic-political.⁵⁷ In 2003 Atalaya and its sister project Territorio de

55 Emilio Hernández, 'El teatro público andaluz', *Primer Acto*, 273 (1998), 103–4; Francisco Ortuño Millán, 'El Centro Andaluz de Teatro: Trayectoria, presente and futuro', *Primer Acto*, 313 (2006), 19–23.

56 See AAVV, *Atalaya: XXV años buscando utopías* (Seville: Centro de Documentación de las Artes Escénicas de Andalucía, 2008).

57 *Ibid.*, p. 451.

Nuevos Tiempos (TNT; Territory of New Times) – defined as a private international centre devoted to training, research and creation – were the only Spanish representatives in a European Union programme on European Theatre Laboratories as Cultural Innovators, in which participants included Denmark's Odin Teatret and France's Théâtre du Soleil.

Sara Molina (b. 1958) and her company Q Teatro (founded in 1995) employ a fragmentary aesthetic that anticipates a knowing spectator able to engage with the wealth of intertextual references employed in productions such as *Tres disparos, dos leones* (Three Shots, Two Lions, 1993) and *Made in China* (2000). The former deploys texts by Francis Bacon, Marguerite Duras, Paul Auster, Botho Strauss, John Berger and Molina herself, while the latter involves Molina in a dialogue with writers including Walter Benjamin, Theodor W. Adorno, Jacques Lacan and Samuel Beckett.

Perhaps Andalusia's most successful theatrical export has been La Zaranda: Teatro Inestable de Andalucía la Baja (Unstable Theatre from Lower Andalusia), a company based in Jerez de la Frontera and directed by Francisco Sánchez (also known as Paco de la Zaranda) since 1978. Its aesthetic is unique in animating dystopic and apocalyptic fantasies that echo Tadeusz Kantor's 'theatre of death'. In works such as *Vinagre de Jerez* (Sherry Vinegar, 1987), the company's best-known piece, a dark, bitter, dreamlike and expressionistic aesthetic emerges, grounded in grotesque deformation and in the establishment on stage of a ceremonial and repetitive rhythm that promotes a conception of character as phantasmagorical (rather than realistic). In other plays, such as *Cuando la vida eterna se acabe* (When Eternal Life comes to an End, 1997), the characters live their own private torment, surrounded by the musicality of *saetas* (religious songs) and Holy Week processions. Eusebio Calonge (b. 1963), a playwright who has premiered all his texts with La Zaranda, has contributed to this particular aesthetic with the creation of indeterminate spaces in which the circular action traps characters within a chaotic existence. As with the work of Atalaya and Q Teatro, La Zaranda has promoted a language of scenic renovation and experimentation that has proved influential on companies such as Málaga Danza Teatro, El Espejo Negro and Los Ulen, who are similarly eschewing realism in an aesthetic that draws on dance-theatre, puppetry and/or pantomime.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ See José Antonio Sedeño, 'Notas sobre el teatro andaluz de creación', in José Antonio Sánchez (ed.), *Artes de la escena y de la acción en España: 1978–2002* (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2006), pp. 215–41; <http://artescenicass.uclm.es>.

Galicia

Any discussion of theatre in Galicia must take into consideration the linguistic situation of a language that has suffered from a process of devaluation and marginalisation, as part of a minority culture considered to be folkloric, rural and exotic, and subjected to interests imposed by an official and often paternalistic language. While the Galician language enjoyed the category of a literary language with the authors of the *Rexurdimento* (the nineteenth-century literary-cultural renaissance), the same did not occur in the theatre arts. It is generally affirmed that the birth of Galician theatre took place with the performance of *A fonte do xuramento* (The Fountain of the Oath), by Francisco María de la Iglesia (1827–97) on 13 August 1882. The creation of the Escola Rexional de Declamación (Regional School of Declamation) in 1902 marked a significant step towards the legitimisation of theatre in Galician.⁵⁹ Popular folkloric choral groups drew on theatre in the development of a performance aesthetic, while the Irmandade de Amigos da Fala (Brotherhood of Friends of Declamation), created by the brothers Ramón (1890–1953) and Antón Vilar Ponte (1881–1936), published an influential bulletin with a 2,000-copy print run beginning in 1916, which dedicated considerable attention to theatre. The theatre soirées of the Conservatorio Nazonal de Arte Galega (National Conservatoire of Galician Art), established in 1919, proved highly influential in disseminating information on European theatre practices, until its activities were curtailed by the Primo de Rivera dictatorship (1923–30).⁶⁰

The repression of the Galician language as a mere vehicle for folkloric settings (*zarzuelas* or choruses, for example) throughout the Franco era effectively halted the possibilities for indigenous Galician theatre until the *teatro independente* (TI; independent theatre) of the 1960s. Building on the *teatro*

59 For a history of the origins of Galician theatre, see Henrique Rabunhal, *Textos e contextos do teatro galego (1671–1936)* (Santiago: Laivento, 1994); Manuel Lorenzo González, Luís Obelleiro and Laura Tato, *A xeración dos Restauradores e o seu contexto histórico: A prosa e o teatro* (Vigo: AS-PG, 1996); Laura Tato, *Teatro galego (1915–1931)* (Santiago: Laivento, 1997); Manuel F. Vieites (ed.), *Cento vinte e cinco anos de teatro galego* (Vigo: Galaxia, 2007).

60 See Laura Tato, *Teatro e nacionalismo (Ferrol 1915–1936)* (Santiago: Laivento, 1995); Laura Tato, *Grupo 'Nós': O teatro* (Vigo: A Nosa Terra/AS-PG, 1997); Emilio Xosé Ínsua, *O teatro das Irmandades da Fala* (Vigo: A Nosa Terra/AS-PG, 1997); Carlos Biscainho and Cilha Lourenço, *O Ideario teatral das Irmandades da Fala: Estudio e antoloxía* (Corunna: Deputación, 2002).

de cámara (chamber theatre) and the notable contributions of theatre artists Ramón Otero Pedrayo (1888–1976), Álvaro Cunqueiro (1911–81) and Jenaro Marinho del Valle (1908–2000), affiliated with the publisher Editorial Galaxia – the face of the process of *regalleguización* (re-Galicianisation) from the 1950s on – the formation of O Facho in 1965, under the direction of Manuel Lourenzo (b. 1943) heralded a new wave of companies that came to exert significant influence on the evolving theatre scene. The Asociación Teatral Valle-Inclán, founded in Orense (now known in Galician as Ourense) in 1967, went on to spawn Histrión 70, which, in turn generated the Agrupación Teatral Auriense and Caritel. The Rivadavia Festival (which ran between 1973 and 1980) offered a tangible meeting point for practitioners and encouraged the development of other companies, such as Teatro Antroido (later Teatro do Aquí), and writers (such as Xosé Agrelo, Emiliano Couto, Euloxio R. Ruibal and Camilo Valdehorras) through its Abrente playwriting competition.⁶¹

In 1978 new companies on the Galician scene, such as Troula, Teatro da Mari-Gaila and A Farándula, began to emerge. Manuel Lourenzo's Teatro Circo became the Escola Dramática Galega (Galician Drama School) and later the Compañía Luís Seoane. Alongside the Santiago-based Ditea, directed by Agustín Magán (1918–98), Noia's Candea, directed by Xosé Agrelo (1937–2006), and Vigo's Teatro Popular Keyzán, directed by Maximino Queizán (b. 1940), were companies that defended the use of the Galician language and championed the growing governmental moves towards freedom and democracy. Audiences were militant by definition, creating a breeding ground for the development of a decidedly professional theatre between 1978 and 1985. In 1985, Xulio Lago (b. 1946) founded Teatro do Atlántico, and in 1987 Eduardo Alonso founded Teatro do Noroeste, companies that continue to maintain a powerful presence on the Galician theatre scene.

The end of the 1980s saw the blossoming of numerous companies, including Chévere, Matarile, Sarabela, Teatro de Ningures, Tranvía Teatro

61 See Roberto Pascual (ed.), *Palabra e acción: A obra de Manuel Lourenzo no sistema teatral galego* (Lugo: Tris Tram, 2006); Cilha Lourenço, *Teatro Circo: Tres textos* (Corunna: Casahamlet, 2010); Dolores Vilavedra and Inma López Silva, *Un abrente teatral: As Mostras e o Concurso de Teatro de Ribadavia* (Vigo: Galaxia, 2002); Manuel Cortés and Xesús Ron (eds.), *Chévere: 15 anos* (Santiago de Compostela: Chévere, 2003); Elena Seijo et al., *25 anos de Sarabela Teatro* (Ourense: Sarabela, 2005).

and Teatro do Morcego. Ten years later, a further wave of companies appeared, such as A Factoría, Ancora Producións, Espello Cóncavo, Lagarta Lagarta, Mofa e Befá, Ollomol Tranvía, Os Quinquilláns, Pífano, Talía Teatro, Teatro do Adro, Teatro Bruto and Teatro Galileo. *Salas alternativas* were solidified as spaces for experimentation. These included Santiago's Sala NASA (home of the Chévere group) and the now disappeared Galán (belonging to Matarile Teatro), Ourense's Sala Caritel, Moaña's Café do Real (Teatro do Morcego) and Vigo's Teatro Ensalle.

The creation of the Centro Dramático Galego (CDG, or Galician Drama Centre) in 1984 signified the beginning of a gradual process of institutionalisation and legitimisation of Galician theatre activities. Propelled by Luis Álvarez Pousa from the Dirección Xeral de Cultura (the Galician Ministry of Culture) as well as the broad support of the profession, it was greeted by a significant degree of public enthusiasm. Large-scale collaborations were initiated with smaller private companies, and high production standards were made possible by generous levels of public subsidy. Indeed, the high levels of financial assistance received by the Instituto Galego de Artes Escénicas e Teatrais (IGAEM; Galician Institute for Performing and Theatre Arts) subsequently came to attract a certain degree of resentment from sectors who questioned the rigour governing the repertoire selection and a lack of clear criteria in defining the CDG's aims and objectives, as well as allegations of political manipulation.⁶²

Still, the picture is not entirely negative: the CDG has enjoyed some successes in the training of actors, the consolidation of an audience, and the incorporation of classics into a Galician history of *mise-en-scène*. In 1994 director Xulio Lago considered the CDG to be a 'casa común' (a house belonging to all), a 'lugar de encontro' (meeting place) through which the finest professionals from the Galician theatre scene would intermittently pass.⁶³ Its directors – Eduardo Alonso (1984–5), Ernesto Chao (1986–7), Eduardo Puceiro (1988), Dorotea Bárcena (Acting Director, 1988), Damián Villalaín (1989), José M. Blanco Gil (1990), Manuel Guede (1991–2005), Ánxeles Cuña (2005–6), Cristina Domínguez (2006–9) and Blanca Cendán

62 On the trajectory of the CDG, see Inma López Silva, *Teatro e canonización: A crítica teatral na prensa periódica galega (1990–2000)* (Lugo: Tris Tram, 2004); Vicente Montoto et al., 'Opiniós sobre os 20 anos de actividade do CDG', *Revista Galega de Teatro*, 39 (2004), 28–33.

63 Quoted in Carina Regueiro, 'O Centro Dramático Galego dez anos despois', *Revista de Letras: La Voz de Galicia* (7 April 1994), p. 5.

(2010–) – have put on an average of three productions per year. Manuel Guede (b. 1956), the CDG's longest-running director, specifically addressed the need to revive the work of dramatists such as Eduardo Blanco Amor (1897–1979), Álvaro de las Casas (1901–50), Daniel Cortezón (1927–2009) and Francisco Taxes (1940–2003), whose texts, first written in an era of 'silencio escénico' (theatrical silence), aspired to the dream of cultural normalisation.⁶⁴ This operation was supported through endeavours such as the 'libros de espectáculo' (performance books), published with each production. The 1996–7 season offered an excellent indication of Guede's programming model: a canonical international classic (an adaptation by Eduardo Alonso of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*), a recuperated Galician text (*Como en Irlanda* [As in Ireland], a homage to a Vilar Ponte, directed by Quico Cadaval) and a contemporary Galician text (*O peregrino errante que cansou ó demo* [The Wandering Pilgrim who Tired out the Devil], by Xabier Lama [b. 1962]). The Spanish-language productions within the polemical *Valle-Inclán* 98 season were touted by Guede as the most important theatre project ever seen in Galicia. Co-directed by Eduardo Alonso (*El embrujado* [The Bewitched]), José Martins (*Las galas del difunto* [The Dead Man's Duds]), Helena Pimenta (*La cabeza del bautista* [The Baptist's Head]) and Guede (*Ligazón* [Blood Pact]), this was the first and only time that the CDG staged texts in Spanish, a decision roundly criticised by most Galician professionals.

Indeed, the CDG has been embroiled in a fair quota of controversies. After the electoral defeat of Manuel Fraga Iribarne, the Partido Popular of Galicia yielded its power to the left-wing coalition formed by the Socialist Party of Galicia and the Bloque Nacionalista Galego (Galician Nationalist Bloc), which dismissed Manuel Guede from the theatre. Ánxeles Cuña replaced him and used the motto 'Queremos reconstruír unha casa na que entre o aire' (We want to rebuild a house that will allow the air to enter) to signal that the CDG aspired to be a theatre for everyone. Its first productions announced an air of renovation: Ana Vallés' *Illa Reunión* (Reunion Island) promoted a new female dramatist and director; *A cabana de Babaiajá* (The Hut of Babaiajá, 2006) was written by young director and dramatist Paula Carballeira; *Medos* (Fears, 2006) offered a new piece by Miquel Insua; while Ellen Lauren's *Eurípides* collated a series of pieces by the Greek

64 Manuel Guede Oliva, 'De poco vale matar al minotauro', *Primer Acto*, 262 (January 1996), 25.

dramatist. Only the first two projects were realised, since, as of March 2006, Cuña's attempts to create a contemporary repertoire and open the space to women artists – out of seventy-five productions by the CDG, only two had previously been given to female directors, Dorotea Bárcena (in 1985) and Ánxeles Cuña herself (in 1993) – had been frustrated, and she suddenly resigned.⁶⁵

There remain key issues to be resolved both within the CDG and the wider landscape of Galician theatre: a reduced market for the excess of offerings with over one hundred companies operating in the area, invisibility outside Galicia, limited public funds to support a broad range of work, the development of new audiences. Platforms such as the Foro Teatral de Sada (Theatre Forum of Sada) and Escena Galega: Asociación Galega de Empresas de Artes Escénicas (The Galician Stage: Galician Association of Performing Arts) remain lively fora for debates. The creation in 2005 of the Escola de Arte Dramática de Galicia (School of Dramatic Art of Galicia) and the funding of three resident companies (Chévere in Santiago, Sarabela Teatro in Ourense and Teatro do Morcego in Narón), promise a degree of stability. Nevertheless, there are challenges and these are not unlike those faced by the cultural industries elsewhere in Spain. The ongoing recession has both diminished the financial contribution that the state makes to the performing arts and created less disposable income. The role of the national theatres within wider discourses of transnationalism, globalisation and cultural legitimacy appears anything but fixed, and looks likely to continue to probe 'the border between aesthetics and politics'⁶⁶ into the second decade of the twenty-first century.

65 In 2008 the IGAEM was replaced by the Axencia Galega das Industrias Culturais (Galician Agency of Cultural Industries), under the auspices of the Consellería de Cultura (Ministry of Culture) – based effectively on the Catalan model. Unlike the IGAEM, the AGADIC includes the totality of cultural and artistic endeavours developed by individual artists, as well as cultural enterprises and industries. It has the goal of supporting Galician culture and the normalisation of the use of the Galician language as a way of protecting Galician identity, promoting the demand for cultural products in Galician society and disseminating the work of women artists, adopting means of positive action as a way of combating gender discrimination.

66 Kruger, *The National Stage*, p. 187.