

Jean-Charles Hoffelé, *Manuel de Falla*
Paris: Fayard, 1992. 220 FF, pp. 556

Manuel de Falla, *Ecrits sur la musique et sur les musiciens*
Arles: Actes Sud, 1992. 140 FF, pp. 286

Jorge de Persia, *I Concurso de Cante Jondo*

Granada: Archivo Manuel de Falla, 1992. 3500 pts, pp. 195 + facsimile

Three important publications on Manuel de Falla have appeared over the last year, signalling a revival of interest in the composer, especially in Latin countries. The Manuel de Falla Archive, opened in 1991, along with the Manuel de Falla Foundation, has played an important role in promoting the composer's music and encouraging exhibitions and publications relating to his life and output. These institutions also provide a wide range of previously unavailable material and facilities to assist further research in the field.

It is in the above context that Hoffelé's biography, the most voluminous one to date, must be judged. What is incredible is that this author has not taken advantage of the resources and documentation of the Archive. Matters are worsened by the fact that he seems oblivious of the existence of the bulk of the bibliography on the subject published over the last decade, much of it being of a revisionist nature. The last chapter, *L'Atlantide retrouvée*, is probably the weakest in this respect as it fails to take into account Andrew Budwig's critical work on Falla's tortuous twenty-year odyssey in his attempts to complete and define his final work, *Atlántida*. The analysis of this work, and of the music in general, is descriptive and fairly superficial, not providing adequate insights into its conception and the sources of the composer's inspiration.

Hoffelé does however provide some interesting background material to Falla's years in Paris (1907-1914), drawing on a variety of primary and secondary sources. The biographical material on this period is enriched by the use of Ricardo Viñes' diaries. The glossary of Spanish and flamenco terms along with that of Spanish and South American composers, though far from faultless, is a handy guide for those not acquainted with Spanish music. The extensive discography, with an at times idiosyncratic commentary, is a useful contribution. On the whole, however, there is not much to

distinguish this book over the more compact biography by Suzanne Demarquez first published thirty years ago.

A collection of Manuel de Falla's writings, also in French, appeared only a couple of months earlier. Actually a translation from Spanish of the late Federico Sopeña's fourth edition of Falla's writings (1988), it represents the first such anthology in French. It is to Jean-Dominique Krynen's credit that he did not restrict himself to a mere translation of Sopeña's text. In fact, he merits the title of co-author/editor for his contributions. Krynen's introduction and appendices attempt to clarify and classify Falla's texts, an aim not always present in Sopeña's convoluted presentations. More importantly, several of Sopeña's gaffes are corrected; most notably with reference to Falla's prologue to Emilio Pujol's *Escuela razonada de la guitarra*. Sopeña had mistakenly reproduced Pujol's introduction to the second volume, claiming it to be Falla's prologue, which appears in the first volume.

Given that many of Falla's writings were originally published in French, though drafts sometimes co-exist in both languages, Krynen has opted for using the published versions in French, noting where discrepancies exist with Falla's originals. With the assistance of the Manuel de Falla Archive he has presented several published texts which had not been included in previous collections, yet numerous omissions persist. Though not a comprehensive or critical edition, this publication does currently represent the most complete and reliable version of Falla's essays on music, and is a far cry from the English version, *Manuel de Falla On Music and Musicians* (London: Marion Boyars, 1972), which is a translation of Sopeña's third compilation (1972). An edition of Falla's writings is currently being prepared in Italian by Paolo Pinamonti.

Manuel de Falla and Federico García Lorca's

essays on flamenco form the backbone of the final book which was released earlier this year. It was largely due to the efforts of these two that the first *Cante Jondo* (literally 'deep-song' —flamenco) competition was held in Granada in 1922. The event itself is a landmark in the history of flamenco and its aims to save the genre had repercussions on the form itself as well as on the Spanish intelligentsia and musicians on a wider plane. To commemorate the seventieth anniversary of this artistic venture the Manuel de Falla Archive has produced a book entitled *I Concurso de Cante Jondo (una reflexión crítica)*, with texts, framing the numerous quotations and documents, by Jorge de Persia, and an incisive prologue on Granada in that era by Antonio Gallego Morell. The title is somewhat misleading as the book largely deals with Falla's involvement in the organisation of the event, as well as providing a critical edition, though not a critical assessment, of Falla's writings on the subject and presenting a separata with superb facsimile reproductions of Falla's and Lorca's essays related to flamenco and the competition. The somewhat jumbled bibliography is of great interest as are the fifty-odd pages dedicated to reproducing mainly newspaper articles from the period.

The author does not however address the importance of the festival on the national and international level, or successfully assess the importance of flamenco, and the event, in Falla's and Lorca's output. In relying heavily on literary and journalistic sources he seems to have focussed more on the controversy surrounding the *Concurso*, anecdotal and descriptive texts making reference to it, and generalisations, often polemical, on the nature of flamenco. It is a pity that this opportunity was not harnessed to produce a more analytical work, especially on a musical and stylistic level, of what went on at the *Concurso*, and its repercussions on the artform. To this end recordings from the period housed at the Archive as well as Falla's own rudimentary transcriptions of some of the songs could have served as a starting point. Such work is greatly needed in the field of flamenco studies. Given the above, the current volume does not greatly enrich our understanding beyond Eduardo Molina Fajardo's highly readable *Manuel de Falla y el Cante Jondo* (Granada: Universidad, 1962) which was reprinted only recently, in 1990, with an extensive introduction and commentary by Andres Soria.

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