Abstract

The Regordosa-Turull wax cylinder collection, held at the Biblioteca de Catalunya, is certainly unique among early recording collections: it contains 358 cylinders recorded by textile industrial Ruperto Regordosa in his Barcelona home and featuring prominent Spanish and non-Spanish singers of opera and zarzuela, as well as composer Isaac Albéniz. This article aims to establish the significance of the collection held for the study of both the amateur recording culture that existed side-by-side with commercial phonograph recordings, and of performance practices in opera and *zarzuela*. By examining the broader characteristics of the collection and textual sources from the period, and closely analysing some of the cylinders, the article discusses how Regordosa adapted some of the generic conventions of commercial recordings of the time, while in some cases departing from those, and what the implications of this are when considering these early recordings as documents of performance practice.

Biographical note

Eva Moreda Rodríguez is Lecturer in Music at the University of Glasgow and the author of *Music and exile in Francoist Spain* (Ashgate, 2015) and *Music criticism and music critics in early Francoist Spain* (Oxford University Press, 2016). Her research on the political and cultural history of Spanish music during the 20th century has been published in *Music and Letters, The Journal of the Royal Musical Association, Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* and *Twentieth-century music*, among others. From January 2018 to June 2019 she held an AHRC Leadership Fellowship, researching the early history of recorded music in Spain.

Keywords

Early recordings, phonograph, wax cylinders, opera, zarzuela, performance practice

Amateur recording on the phonograph in *fin-de-siècle* Barcelona: Practices, repertoires and performers in the Regordosa-Turull wax cylinder collection

Starting around 1898, and throughout the first decade of the twentieth century, Catalan textile industrialist Ruperto Regordosa recorded several dozen prominent musicians in his home in Barcelona using an Edison Suitcase Standard Phonograph. Regordosa's efforts resulted in 358 wax cylinders containing 260 individual musical performances[1] and currently held at the Biblioteca de Catalunya under the name Col·lecció Regordosa-Turull.[3] The collection is, without a doubt, one of the most significant for the study of the early history of recorded classical music, both in Spain and globally. This is not only because of the sheer volume of recordings and the prominent performers they feature (including pianist and composer Isaac Albéniz,), but also because the recordings were made by Regordosa himself for his own private use and not for commercial purposes. This makes it one of the most substantial collections from this period of what we might call amateur recordings.[4] Julius Block, a Russian business and phonograph enthusiast who recorded such luminaries as Sergey Taneyev, Anton Arensky, Paul Pabst and a young Jasha Heifetz in his home, only left

[1] A minority of cylinders are not of music but of spoken word (e.g. imitations of animals or of public speakers). Besides, some of the pieces are recorded over two, three or even as many as four cylinders; some of the implications of this will be discussed later.

[3] Xavier Turull was a Catalan violinist who acquired the collection in the 1960s from the Regordosa family and arranged for it to be gifted to the Biblioteca de Catalunya after his death in 2000.

[4] For archiving and curation purposes, Paton distinguishes between commercial and non-commercial recordings, with home recordings being a particular type of the latter. See: Christopher Ann Paton, 'Appraisal of sound recordings for textual archivists', *Archival issues,* 22:2 (1997), 117-132. I have opted for 'amateur recordings' here (and throughout the article) because none of the categories proposed by Paton captures the sorts of practices discussed in this article: on the one hand, while all of Regordosa's cylinders (and the Block, Mapleson and Pérez collections) are certainly non-commercial, so are a number of other recordings (e.g. ethnographic) whose study would not be appropriate to answer the questions at hand here. On the other hand, 'home' can sometimes be inaccurate, as Regordosa recorded some of his at the Fonda de Oriente, an inn in Córdoba. This, nevertheless, does not detract from the fact that, in many cases, the home as a space would be significant to the production of these recordings, and I will discuss this in due course.

behind about 100 musical recordings,[5] and a similar number resulted from the efforts of Lionel Mapleson – a librarian at the Metropolitan Theatre in New York who recorded singers live on the Met stage for non-commercial purposes.[6]

Within Spain, three other collections of amateur recordings are currently held by public institutions (Vicente Miralles Segarra's, Leandro Pérez's and Pedro Aznar's) , but their numbers are minuscule compared to Regordosa's.[7] Miralles Segarra's collection, now held at the Museo de la Telecomunicación at the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, counts about twenty amateur cylinders presumably recorded by Miralles Segarra himself featuring family members and acquaintances singing (often unaccompanied), reciting or speaking.[8] This is indeed a valuable collection for the study of the culture surrounding home recording practices, but not so much a document of historical performance practices on stage, as the singers featured were all amateurs. In the northern Spanish city of Huesca, local businessman Leandro Pérez recorded in 1907 nine pieces played by the then-teenaged violinist José (Pepito) Porta, who then went on to teach in Lausanne and premiered the trio version of Stravinsky's *Histoire du soldat*.[9] Pedro Aznar, a businessman from Barbastro in Aragon whose collection of commercial wax cylinders is now held at the Biblioteca Nacional de

[5] *The Dawn of Recording: The Julius Block Cylinders,* Marston Records, 3 CDS (West Chester, 2008). Block's collection, including spoken word cylinders, amounts to ca. 215 recordings.
[6] *The Mapleson Cylinders,* New York Public Library, 6 LPs (New York, 1985).
[7] On the other hand, though, Miralles Segarra, Pérez and Aznar all owned significant numbers of commercial recordings on wax cylinder, which is not the case with Regordosa.
[8] Descriptions of the collections' ítems, as well as digitizations of some cylinders, can be accessed at Museo de la Telecomunicación Vicente MIralles Segarra – Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, *Museo Etsit,* http://colteleco.webs.upv.es/index_cat.php?letra=c&sel_c=1&page=5 (last accessed: 12th November 2018).
[9] The Porta cylinders (among other recordings from the Pérez collection) were transferred to CD as: *Antiguas grabaciones fonográficas aragonesas, 1898-1907: la colección de cilindros para fonógrafo de Leandro Pérez*, CODA-OUT (Zaragoza, 2010).

España, also left a very limited number of cylinders he recorded himself, presumably of non-professional musicians.[10]

Despite its significance, though, Regordosa's collection has not yet been the object of extended critical examination, and there might be several reasons why this is the case. Indeed, it has only been recently digitized and made widely available to researchers,[11] and the lack of scholarly research about the early history of recording technologies in Spain and in Catalonia[12] can make these recordings difficult to situate. To provide a detailed examination of every recording in the collection would be too ambitious an aim for this article; what I instead aim to do here is to articulate how the collection might be transformative to our understanding of early music-recording practices in Spain and elsewhere. I argue that this transformative potential is most obvious in two areas: the study of historical performance practices as documented in early recordings, and the study of the home recording culture that developed side-by-side with commercial recording around 1900 in Spain and elsewhere. For reasons that are first and foremost of a practical nature, though, these two areas will not be given equal

[10] For example, an unnamed piece for piccolo and piano; reference number CL/308.

[11] A selection of ca. 50 cylinders are currently available online at no cost at Memòria Digital de Catalunya, *Fons de cilindres sonors*, < http://mdc.csuc.cat/cdm/landingpage/collection/sonorbc> (last accessed: 2nd October 2018). Most other cylinders can be listened to in digital (.wav) format at the Biblioteca itself free of cost, or acquired for €0.50 from Biblioteca de Catalunya, *Venda en línia de reproduccions digitals,* <https://cofre.bnc.cat/> (last accessed: 2nd October 2018).

[12] To date, only one book-length study has been published: Mariano Gómez-Montejano, *El fonógrafo en España: cilindros españoles* (Madrid, 2005). The book contains a wealth of meticulous information about the earliest commercial recordings in Spain, made on wax cylinder support (ca. 1896-1905), but it is the work of a keen collector rather than a fully critical historiographical study. The same can be said about the numerous contributions that appeared between 2002 and 2010 in *Girant a 78 rpm,* the newsletter of the Associació per a la Salvaguarda del Patrimoni Enregistrat (a Catalonia-based association for the conservation of recordings). A more critical account, even though still limited in scope, can be read at Eva Moreda Rodríguez, 'Prefiguring the Spanish recording diva: how *gabinetes fonográficos* (phonography studios) changed listening practices, 1898-1905', *Listening to Music: People, Practices and Experiences,* ed. Helen Barlow and David Rowland (Milton Keynes, 2017), < https://ledbooks.org/proceedings2017/2017/02/27/prefiguring-the-spanish-recording-diva-how-gabinetes-fonograficos-changed-listening-practices-1898-1905/> (last accessed: 9th October 2018).

weight throughout this article. From a purely musicological point of view, the most immediate appeal of the collection might lie in what it reveals about vocal performing practices from around 1900. The numbers of cylinders are indeed rather substantial (they amount to about one fifth of the total surviving wax cylinders recorded in Spain)[13] and – as will be discussed later – they feature some of the most significant singers of their time, including some of whom no other recordings have survived. Nevertheless, a full examination of the performance practice issues latent in a collection of 260 recordings in disparate genres cannot be satisfactorily addressed without giving precedence to broader contextual and historical issues, from the commercial recording landscape in Spain and internationally, to Regordosa's own recording practices and ideas about recording. This contextualization work, though, should not be regarded as merely ancillary to performance practice research. By itself, it can also substantially add to our understanding of home and amateur recording practices in the early days of recording technologies, which is a crucial but understudied topic, with no single studied devoted to it, even though it is widely recognized that phonograph owners did engage in self-recording practices.[14] Studying these early practices can also help us better understand the history of amateur or self-recording, of which there are numerous well-known examples in later periods of time. Indeed, some of these later practices have received more scholarly attention,[15] and in

[13] The most significant collections of Spanish-produced wax cylinders (most of which commercial) are held at Eresbil Archivo de la Música Vasca and the Biblioteca Nacional de España.
[14] The reasons for this appear to be, first and foremost, practical: amateur recordists do not always make copies of their recordings (once the recording is lost, it is lost forever), and there are also no catalogues or business records which can alert researchers to the existence of these collections. More generally, amateur recordings might be associated with lack of professionalism or a relaxation in standards.
[15] Steve Jones, 'The cassette underground', *Popular music and society*, 4:1 (1990), 75-84; Paul Long, Sarah Baker, Lauren Istvandity and Jez Collins, 'A labour of love: the affective archives of popular music culture', *Archives and Records*, 38:1, 61-79; Bryce Merrill, 'Music to remember me by: Technologies of memory in home recording', *Symbolic interaction*, 33:3 (2010), 456-474.

this article I will draw on these to explore how issues of affection, memory, self-expression, the archive and agency led Regordosa to adopt certain practices from commercial recording labels and develop others of his own to turn the phonograph into an archiving and memory technology adapted to capture and reflect his own live music experience in Barcelona.

In studying the broader context surrounding early recordings to ascertain their value as documents of performance practice, I follow what is now a substantial tradition going back to Robert Philip's pioneering study in changes in instrumental performance.[18] Implicitly or explicitly, studies within this tradition share an assumption that early recordings cannot be regarded as perfect representations of widespread performing practices on stage at a given moment in time, in a given context, or even for a given performer. Instead, they argue (and, in many cases, demonstrate in practice) that the researcher must take a wealth of contextual information into account to ascertain the extent to which a particular recording might allow us to draw broader conclusions on performance practice. This often takes the

[18] Robert Philip, *Early Recordings and Musical Style. Changing Tastes in Instrumental Performance, 1900-1950* (Cambridge, 1992). Further bibliography includes: Michael Chanan, *Repeated takes: A Short History of Recording and Its Effects on Music* (New York, 1995); Patrick Feaster, 'Framing the Mechanical Voice: Generic Conventions of Early Sound Recording', *Folklore Forum,* 32 (2001), 57-102; Robert Philip, *Performing music in the age of recording* (New Haven, 2004); Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'Portamento and Musical Meaning', *Journal of Musicological Research,* 25: 3-4 (2006), 233-261; Nicholas Cook, 'Performance analysis and Chopin's mazurkas', *Musicae Scientiae* 11/2 (2007), pp. 183-207; Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, 'Sound and meaning in recordings of Schubert's "Die junge Nonne', *Musicae Scientiae,* 11: 2 (2007), 209-236; Patrick Feaster, '"The following record": making sense of phonographic performance, 1877-1908' (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 2007); Rebecca Plack, 'The substance of style: how singing creates sound in Lieder recordings, 1902-1939' (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 2008); Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *The Changing Sound of Music* (London, 2009); Nicholas Cook, 'The Ghost in the Machine: Towards a Musicology of Recordings', *Musicae Scientiae,* 14:2 (2010), 3-21; Neal Peres da Costa, *Off the record* (New York, 2012); Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (New York, 2013); Massimo Zicari, ''Ah! non credea mirarti' nelle fonti discografiche di primo Novecento: Adelina Patti e Luisa Tetrazzini', *Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft*, 34/35 (2014/2015), 193-222; Massimo Zicari, 'Expressive Tempo Modifications in Adelina Patti's Recordings: An Integrated Approach', *Empirical Musicology Review,* 12:1-2 (2017), 42-56.

researcher outside the realm of musicological or performance practice research, owing to the complexity of the contexts (technological-material, economic, cultural-aesthetic) in which early recording technologies emerged.[19]

This article thus draws from this body of multidisciplinary research. Even though I will be citing some of this research throughout my article to expand on specific points, there is one set of concepts in particular that I will like to introduce at this stage, as they are, in my view, crucial to understand how Regordosa might have conceived the recordings he made himself *vis-à-vis* his experiences of both listening commercial recordings and attending live performances. I am referring here to concepts referring to the cultural-historical mechanisms by which listeners come to accept a recording as a representation of reality, even though it is not such in strictly acoustic terms: it is rather, as put by Peter Johnson, 'a specifies of artistic illusion.'[20] Stefan Gauß writes that '[the phono-object] 'does not simply capture sound and then play it back again; rather, it replaces the captured acoustic reality with something new, with its own

[19] These include: VK. Chew, *Talking machines: 1877-1914: some aspects of the early history of the gramophone* (London, 1967); Oliver Read and Walter L. Welch, *From tin foil to stereo evolution of the phonograph* (Indiana, 1976); Roland Gelatt, *Edison's fabulous phonograph 1877-1977* (London, 1977); Daniel Marty, *Histoire illustré du phonographe* (Paris, 1979); Paul Charbon, *La machine parlante* (Paris, 1981); James P. Kraft, *Stage to Studio. Musicians and the Sound Revolution, 1890-1950* (Baltimore and London, 1996); Lisa Gitelman, *Scripts, Grooves, and Writing Machines. Representing Technology in the Edison Era* (Stanford, 1999); William Howland Kennedy, *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890-1945* (New York and Oxford, 1999); Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past. Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham and London, 2003); Nathan David Bowers, 'Creating a home culture for the phonograph: women and the rise of sound recordings in the United States, 1877-1913' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 2007); David Patmore, 'Selling sounds: recording and the record business', *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook, Erik Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and John Rink (Cambridge, 2009), 120-139; Arved Ashby, *Absolute music, mechanical reproduction* (Oakland, 2010); Mark Katz, *Capturing sound: how technology has changed music* (Berkeley, 2010); Adam Krims, 'The changing functions of music recordings and listening practices', *Recorded music. Performance, culture and technology*, ed. Amanda Bayley (Cambridge, 2010), 68-85; Joao da Silva, 'Mechanical Instruments and Phonography: the Recording Angel of historiography', *Radical Musicology,* 6 (2012-2013).

[20] Peter Johnson, 'Illusion and aura of the classical audio recording', *Recorded music. Performance, culture and technology*, ed. Amanda Bayley (Cambridge, 2010), 37-51, at 37.

specific qualities,'[21] while Feaster's 'performative fidelity' (i.e., the fact that the recording, among a multiplicity of frames or options, 'is accepted as doing whatever the original would have done in the same context') highlights the socially constructed, evolving nature of the above-mentioned mechanisms.[22] It also follows from the above that the development of these entails the participation, conscious or unconscious, of a range of agents (listeners, producers, performers, record companies); in this sense, Ashby argues that the early decades of commercial recording technologies were also a period in which 'phonographic literacy' developed, with successful performers being fully able to understand and respond to the notion of phonographic literacy shared by their contemporaries, [23] and, in a different article, Feaster reminds us that early audiences needed to be guided 'in how [they] should interpret the experience of hearing.'[24] Regordosa's recordings provide a fascinating and rare example of how these concepts might have developed in practice, as we examine his extensive collection of recordings, compare them with each other and ascertain how he might adopted some of the practices introduced by the *gabinetes* to this effect while departing from or challenging others in order to make his cylinders more representative of his experience of live music.

Following on from the separation I have outlined above between the broader social, cultural and musical context, on the one hand, and issues of performance practice, on the other, the main body of this article will be divided in two sections: 'Outside sound'

[21] Stefan Gauß, 'Listening to the Horn: on the Cultural History of the Phonograph and the Gramophone', *Sounds of Modern History: Auditory Cultures in 19th- and 20th-Century Europe*, ed. Daniel Morat (Berghan 2014), 71-100.
[22] Patrick Feaster, ''Rise and Obey the Command': Performative Fidelity and the Exercise of Phonographic power', *Journal of Popular Music Studies,* 24:3 (2012), 357-395, at 358 and 359.
[23] Ashby, *Absolute music, mechanical reproduction,* 30 and 97.
[24] Feaster, 'Framing the Mechanical Voice', 59.

and 'Inside sound.' In the latter, rather than drawing conclusions about performance practice as reflected in Regordosa's recordings, I examine broader issues concerning sound (i.e. not only the music, but spoken word as well) and consider how these expand or challenge our current understanding of early recordings as documents of performance practice as discussed in bibliography, and how they advance new questions that can inform future research more decidedly centred around performance practices in Regordosa's collections. At the same time, though, I am aware that recorded sound and context cannot be easily dissociated, so there will be considerably back-and-forth between both sections. When discussing broader issues concerning the development of the collection and Regordosa's motivations to assemble it, I will occasionally take detours to briefly discuss the musical content of some cylinders, as these can illuminate some aspects of the recording-making process, and in my closer discussion of a selected number of recordings in the second section, I will still be referring to aspects of the broader context – when they are helpful in clarifying particular sonic aspects of the recordings.

An important caveat here is that, as with all digitized early recordings, transfer processes can significantly influence what we hear and thus lead us to make wrong conclusions. Leech-Wilkinson provides an apt summary of how transfers can alter the speed and pitch of wax cylinders,[25] a presentation by Margarida Ullate i Estanyol, sound curator at the Biblioteca de Catalunya, provides some information about how the transfers of the Regordosa collection were made.[26] Although when discussing

[25] Leech-Wilkinson, *The changing sound of music,* chapter 3, paras 21-28.

[26] Margarida Ullate i Estanyol, "Albéniz, flamenco and other rarities within the Regordosa-Turull collection", paper delivered at the Gesellschaft für historische Tonträger, 17 April 2015, Lisbon, available at www.bnc.cat%2Fcontent%2Fdownload%2F101705%2F1562648%2Fversion%2F1%2Ffile%2FAlb%25C3%25

some of the individual cylinders I will reflect on the extent to which the transfer might have be problematic, there are two details in Ullate i Estanyol's presentation that are relevant to assess the overall quality and fidelity of the whole collection. Firstly, she states that the transfers available at the BC contain no edits introduced during the transfer process – whereas commercial releases on CD of some of the collection's cylinders were indeed edited (e.g. equalization, cleaning, decliking). Secondly, since all cylinders were digitized as part of the same campaign, we can imagine that the large numbers ensured that the engineers had a sufficiently solid frame of reference to choose appropriate transfer speeds, as speeds can often only be decided by listening to multiple recordings by the same performer or made under the same conditions.[27]

Outside sound: the mechanics of building a collection, the singers, the repertoire

The early developments of commercial phonography in Spain provide a crucial frame of reference to understand Regordosa's recording practices. The Edison Spring Motor, Home and Standard phonographs were introduced in Spain in the years 1896-1898. These new devices were more affordable and easily operable than its predecessors and hence more appealing for domestic consumption,[28] and so it was around them that an indigenous recording industry developed, led by the so-called *gabinetes fonográficos* (phonographic cabinets) and not, as was the case elsewhere, by Edison's companies

A9niz%252C%2Bflamenco%2Band%2Bother%2Brarities%2Bwithin%2Bthe%2BRegordosa-Turull%2Bcollection.pdf&usg=AOvVaw32G58-yXXZYW5EzBV2GPOl (last accessed: August 2019), pp. 15-16.

[27] Leech-Wilkinson, *The changing sound of music,* chapter 3, paras 21-23.

[28] Before that, phonographs were indeed sporadically exhibited and demonstrated in Spain as a scientific curiosity, but very few Spaniards owned a phonograph for private use, and commercially produced recordings were not available for sale yet (no recordings from these demonstrations have survived).

themselves.[29] There is evidence of at least forty *gabinetes* active around this time in Spain, operating independently from each other.[30] Some were essentially a one-man operation, whereas others functioned as a side line for established opticians, pharmacists, scientific equipment sellers or electricians. They sold phonographs, accessories and a small number of recordings imported from the US and France, but what made the *gabinetes* thrive was the recordings they produced and marketed themselves employing mostly musicians working locally. From 1899, the *gabinetes* faced competition from gramophone multinationals (Gramophone, Pathé, Odeon) – which could, crucially, produce hundreds of copies from the same matrix – and by 1905 all *gabinetes* had either closed down or became resellers of gramophone discs. More than a thousand recordings from this short-lived era have made it to our days, which is in itself testimony to one of the most important contributions that the *gabinetes* made to the history of recording technologies in Spain. Indeed, they turned sound recordings from scientific curiosities to aesthetic artefacts and commodities[31] and, in doing so, they were key to the development of the above-mentioned concepts of phonographic literacy, performative fidelity and others in Spain. In doing so, *gabinetes* operated in close connection to their own local context: they frequently recorded recently premiered success operas and *zarzuelas,* as well as others from the

[29] E.g. in the United Kingdom. See Chew, *Talking machines,* 13-16, 26.
[30] The most exhaustive published secondary source on the *gabinetes* remains Gómez-Montejano, *El fonógrafo en España.* See also: Moreda Rodríguez, 'Prefiguring the Spanish recording diva'. Other than that, key primary sources for the study of the period are two publications called *Boletín fonográfico,* both published between 1900 and 1901 but independently of each other, in Madrid and Valencia (the Madrid *Boletín* was a supplement to the magazine *El cardo*). These can be accessed at: Hemeroteca Digital, *El cardo,*< http://hemerotecadigital.bne.es/details.vm?q=id:0028088575&lang=en> (the *Boletín fonográfico* supplement was published from 22nd February 1901) (last accessed: 9th October 2018), Biblioteca Valenciana Digital, *Boletín fonográfico,* < http://bivaldi.gva.es/es/consulta/registro.cmd?id=10000005644> (last accessed: 9th October 2018).
[31] Moreda Rodríguez, 'Prefiguring the Spanish recording diva'.

repertoire that potential customers would be familiar with. They also recorded singers in roles they were known for (although this was not always possible) and favoured, especially in *zarzuela* recordings, certain ways of saying and communicating text expressively. In Madrid, many *gabinetes,* were also located next door or in close proximity to opera and *zarzuela* theatres, making it likely that their customers would acquire recordings as mementos of the live music experience.

A second key contribution of the *gabinetes* was the introduction of amateur recording practices in domestic settings. Self-recording was a key part of the *gabinetes'* publicity strategies: most *gabinetes* consistently mentioned blank cylinders in their advertisements and, when the gramophone came along, they repeatedly argued that the phonograph was superior because its self-recording capabilities.[32] The extent to which the *gabinetes'* strategy was successful is difficult to ascertain (in Germany, for example, similar advertisement techniques did not result in success), [33] but there is evidence that at least a handful of phonograph owners engaged in amateur recording practices, such as Miralles Segarra, Pérez and Aznar. Others wrote in to Valencia's *Boletín fonográfico* seeking advice to make home recordings, or offering their own.[34] While accounts suggest that these individuals were mainly motivated by an interest in technology and/or music, they also constitute an early example of the persona-building processes typically associated with the consumption of recordings at later stages in the history of recorded music, in an era when these processes have been

[32] 'El fonógrafo y el gramófono', *El cardo*, 8 February 1901, p. 14; Ecos', *Diario oficial de avisos de Madrid,* 25 May 1901, 2.
[33] Gauß, 'Listening to the horn', 80.
[34] 'Notas varias', *Madrid científico,* 203 (1898), 9; A. [full name unknown] Marín, 'La impresión de fonogramas', *Boletín fonográfico,* 2 (1900), 19-22; 'Membranas y bocinas', *Boletín fonográfico,* 25 (1901), 13-14; Álvaro Ureña, *Fonógrafo* (advertisement), *La época*, 15 December 1902, 3.

scarcely understood.[35] Indeed, with the *gabinetes* skilfully positioning themselves within discourses about science, technology, modernization and national identity, phonograph owners would also be signalling that they belonged to a technologically literate middle class that was contributing to the economic and social development of the country by stimulating foreign trade and importing new and culturally refined entertainment forms.[36] While such discourses have commonalities with others which helped adoption of the phonograph elsewhere,[37] they also have uniquely Spanish traits, derived from Spain's anxiety for renovation and Europeanization after the loss of its last colonies in 1898.

The mechanics of building a collection

Regordosa acquired his first phonograph relatively early in the *gabinetes* era, at some point between April 1898 and the end of 1899. We know this because the Edison Suitcase Standard Phonograph, model A, which he owned, was first launched in the former date, and because his flamenco recordings must have been made by the end of 1899, as these were recorded at the Fonda de Oriente in Córdoba, which was last active around that time.[38] Although the dates above make it possible that Regordosa acquired the device from a *gabinete* in Barcelona (where the first *gabinete* opened in

[35] Krims, 'The changing functions of music recordings', 69.
[36] 'Nuevo establecimiento', *El correo militar*, 19 July 1897, 2; Cilindrique, 'El arte y el gramófono', *El cardo,* 22 December 1900, 14; 'Industria fonográfica', *El Cardo,* 22 January 1901, 14; Álvaro Ureña, [untitled], *El cardo,* 8 March 1901, 15; Cilindrique, 'Cosas de fonografía', *El cardo,* 30 March 1901, 15-6; Cilindrique, 'De fonografía', *El Cardo*, 8 September 1901, 14; Cilindrique, 'Asuntos fonográficos', *El cardo,* 8 October 1901, 14; Álvaro Ureña, *Fonógrafos* (advertisement), *La Época,* 15 December 1902, 3.
[37] For example, middle-class ideologies of the parlor in the US have been studied by Bowers, 'Creating a home culture for the phonograph', and Kennedy, *Recorded Music in American Life.*
[38] Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Córdoba [Córdoba Bar Association], *Almanaque del Diario de Córdoba* (Córdoba, 1899), 22. I have also corresponded with Margarida Ullate i Estanyol, curator of sound at the BC, on the matter.

April 1899[39]), there is no evidence whether this is the case, or whether he bought it elsewhere in Spain or imported it from abroad. Indeed, the only evidence of Regordosa's connections to any *gabinetes* is a set of three cylinders from Madrid-based *gabinete* Hugens y Acosta. Nevertheless, as I will argue throughout this and the next section, Regordosa's recordings follow many of the conventions and practices introduced by *gabinetes,* suggesting that he was indeed more familiar with their recordings than his holdings indicate.

Regordosa's background is line with what trade magazines and advertising strategies reveal about phonograph buyers and consumers at the time in Spain. These would mostly be men living in cities or sizeable towns, from a middle or upper-class background and, in some cases, with a previous interest in or professional familiarity with applied science and technology. As a textile industrialist, Regordosa would have been familiar with technological innovations coming from abroad. He was also active in a range of organizations representing the interests of business owners in Catalonia,[40] which suggests that he was sympathetic to some of the premises of the nascent Catalan nationalism, particularly in which concerns regarding entrepreneurial activity as key to the economic development and modernization of the region. We can therefore imagine that the *gabinetes'* discourses on technology, modernity and national identity would have similarly resonated with him.

[39] 'Hojas sueltas', *Los deportes,* 15 April 1899, 142; see also *La música ilustrada hispano-americana,* 25 April 1899, 10

[40] 'Notas locales', *La Vanguardia,* 28 January 1896, 2; Notas locales', *La Vanguardia,* 27 July 1902, 2; 'Notas locales', *La Vanguardia,* 6 January 1904, 2; 'Notas locales', *La Vanguardia,* 27 January 1906, 2; 'Notas locales', *La Vanguardia,* 21 May 1908, 2; Sobre reclamaciones arancelarias', *La Vanguardia,* 24 November 1897, 2. Perhaps most notably, in 1913, together with other Catalan businessmen, he campaigned against a state law that reduced working hours for workers; see 'Los fabricantes de la Montaña', *La Vanguardia,* 18 October 1913, 4.

Like many in the Barcelona bourgeoisie, Regordosa was also engaged in philanthropic activities, particularly those concerning the Catholic Church,[41] and had a subscription to Teatre del Liceu,[42] Barcelona's opera theatre and a key centre of bourgeois sociability at the time. The Liceu was indeed key to Regordosa's recording activities: most of the opera singers he recorded sang there between 1898 and Regordosa's death in 1918 (see table I),[43] which suggests he selected and perhaps contacted singers at the Liceu itself. As for *zarzuela* singers, a majority of them also appeared within these dates in *zarzuela* theatres in Barcelona.

[41] 'Notas locales', *La Vanguardia,* 22 December 1899, 2.
[42] 'Notas locales', *La Vanguardia,* 3 April 1912, 2.
[43] Out of all the *zarzuela* and opera singers recorded by Regordosa, only two do not seem to have had a stage career: a señora Pastor de Hernández, who made six *zarzuela* recordings for Regordosa, and a señor Reinlein, who recorded three tenor opera arias and Leoncavallo's *Mattinata.* Despite the German name, there was a Reinlein family living in Barcelona at the time. Both individuals reveal themselves as competent singers, indebted to the romanticized interpretations (i.e. use of rubato, portamento) that they would have likely seen on the Barcelona stages.

Table I. Singers not permanently based in Barcelona who recorded for Regordosa and their visits to the city.

Singer	Number of recordings	Visits to Barcelona in the 1898-1918 period[44]	Notes
Pepita Alcácer	6	1899, 1900, 1901, 1904, 1906, 1907	
Lucio Aristi	4	1901	
Lina Cassandro	2	1900	
Néstor de la Torre	3	1903, 1904, 1905	Retired 1908
Amalia de Roma	6	1900	
Concha Dahlander	4	1901, 1903	Retired 1907
Albany Debriege	6	1903, 1910, 1913	
Juan Delor	2	1901, 1909	
Ramona Galán	12	1905, 1909, 1910, 1911, 1913	

[44] Data have been compiled from the theatre information section of the newspaper *La Vanguardia.*

Edoardo Garbin	2	1899, 1900, 1901, 1908, 1912, 1913	
Marina Gurina	19	1899, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1907	
Josefina Huguet	23	1898, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1910, 1911, 1914, 1915	
Luis Iribarne	15	1903, 1907, 1909	
Rosalía (Rosalie?) Lambrecht	2	April-May 1899	
Adriana Palermi	6	1903, 1905	
Andrés Perelló de Segurola	8	1903, 1904, 1905, 1909	
Mario Sammarco	6	1900, 1902, 1905, 1906	
José Sigler	4	1898, 1903	Died 1903
José Torres de Luna	5	1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1908, 1910, 1914, 1916, 1918	

The cylinder cases themselves do not contain any indication of dates, and so the Biblioteca de Catalunya has dated all the cylinders between 1898 and 1918, the year of Regordosa's death. However, a cursory look at the above table suggest that Regordosa's recording activities might have been concentrated in a shorter time span of ten to twelve years: indeed, few of the singers above visited Barcelona after 1910, and those who did were also in Barcelona before 1910. Sigler's recordings must by force date from before 1903, and those by Dahlander and De la Torre from before 1907 and 1908 respectively, but there is no recording in the collection that must by force have been made *after* 1909 or 1910. Other evidence supports this: Regordosa recorded exclusively on two-minute brown wax cylinders, even though this often meant that he had to split longer numbers between two or more cylinders; four-minute wax cylinders would have proved more practical in those cases, but they were only introduced in 1908.[45] Moreover, unlike in other contexts where the gramophone and phonograph coexisted into the 1910s, in Spain the former replaced the later almost completely after 1905, which might have made it difficult for Regordosa to source cylinders and other supplies.

The premiere dates of the works Regordosa recorded further confirm that his recording activities might not have extended into the 1910s, as the newest work he recorded dates from 1906.[46] Perhaps more significantly, they also offer insights into how Regordosa conceived of his recording enterprise. A significant number of the arias Regordosa recorded came from operas premiered at the Liceu between 1898 and

[45] Peter Schamberger, 'Cylinder Records: An Overview', *ARSC Journal,* 26:2(1995), 135-161, at 135.
[46] This is Manuel Fernández Caballero's concert song *La riojanica*, premiered in 1906.

1902,[47] or from *zarzuelas* premiered at various theatres in Barcelona around those same dates.[48] We might imagine that some of those numbers would have been recorded relatively soon after their success on stage; this provides the first piece of evidence that Regordosa's recording activities were inextricably linked to his experience of live music, using the phonograph as a technology of memory in seeking to recreate and capture some aspects of the experience.[49] More evidence in support of this notion will be discussed in the course of this and the next section.

The singers

Studying the singers' names in table 1 provides further insights into Regordosa's unique recording practices: indeed, whereas comparatively few singers at the top of the profession recorded for the *gabinetes* – due to the inconsistent, often questionable quality of phonograph recordings and the laboriousness of recording sessions[50] -, Regordosa consistently recorded performers of national and international fame. It is likely that Regordosa's bourgeois and industrial background gave him respectability in the eyes of performers. Similarly, the fact that the recordings were not to be released commercially would have dissipated any concerns about technical limitations or

[47] E.g. *La Bohème* (Liceu premiere 10th April 1898, to great acclaim), *Die Walküre* (25th January 1899), Giordano's *Fedora* (April 1899), Mascagni's *Iris* (29th December 1900), *Tosca* (30th March 1902), Felip Pedrell's *Els Pirineus* (4th January 1902). On the other hand, Alberto Franchetti's *Germania* was not premied at Liceu, but at Teatro Novedades, in September 1905.
[48] E.g. Manuel Fernández Caballero's *Gigantes y cabezudos* and Apolinar Brull's *La buena sombra* (both 1898), Luis Arnedo's *La golfemia* (1900), Amadeo Vives's *Doloretes*, Federico Chueca's *El bateo* and *La alegría de la huerta* (all three premiered 1901), Ruperto Chapí's *El puñao de rosas* and Vives's *Lola Montes* (both premiered 1902).
[49] Merill, 'Music to remember me by', 458-464.
[50] This is consonant with other national contexts elsewhere, e.g. in France (Gelatt, *Edison's fabulous phonograph 1877-1977*, 88 and 102). With the possible exception of America-based Italian engineer Giovanni Bettini (Read and Welch, *From tinfoil to stereo,* 76), the phenomenon of 'celebrity records' not becoming widespread until 1903-1904 (Alexandra Wilson, 'Galli-Curci comes to town', *The Arts of the Prima Donna in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Hilary Poriss (New York, 2012), pp. 328-347, at 330).

reputational damage. This is a first significant aspect in which Regordosa's collection departs from what we find in *gabinetes'* catalogues: it contains singers who never recorded commercially[51] or who sang repertoire they never recorded commercially; this opens up the array of recordings we have available for performance practice research, but at the same time requires us to be sensitive to the particularities and dynamics of home recording practices, as I will discuss later in connection with a number of examples.

A majority of Regordosa's singers, though, did indeed record commercially: some for the *gabinetes* or for Compagnie Française du Gramophone on its successive trips to Madrid and Barcelona from 1899 onwards,[52] others for the Milan-based label Fonotipia between 1904 and 1909.[53] This overlap opens up questions and provides some answers as to how singers might have acclimatized to and conceived of recording technologies in these early days – an issue that existing bibliography has sometimes highlighted. Answers are complicated by the fact that both the *gabinetes'* and Regordosa's cylinders are undated, and this makes it impossible, for example, to ascertain whether any given singer recorded for Regordosa first and then commercially, or vice-versa.

[51] These include Amalia de Roma, Lina Cassandro, Concha Dahlander, Marina Gurina and Juan Delor.
[52] Other singers who recorded both for Regordosa and for the *gabinetes* include *zarzuela tiple* (soprano) Marina Gurina, and operatic singers, bass Andrés Perelló de Segurola and soprano Josefina Huguet, who recorded for as many as four *gabinetes. Zarzuela* singers Pepita Alcácer, Marina Gurina, Fidel Alba and Paco Martínez all recorded for Compagnie Française du Grammophone during the multinational's visits to Barcelona between 1899 and 1902, before it opened a branch in the city, and so did Huguet and Perelló de Segurola. See Alan Kelly, *The Gramophone Company Limited, The Spanish Catalogue: including Portuguese recordings* (London, 2006), no page numbers.
[53] These include: José Torres de Luna, Mario Sammarco, Edoardo Garbin and Avelina Carrera; see H. Frank Andrews (comp.), *The Fonotipia Catalogue based on The Fonotipia Ledgers, 1904, 1939* (CD-Rom) (East Barnet, 2002). Fonotipia one of the most successful in Europe before the First World War, specializing in opera and widely regarded today as a key source for the study of operatic singing in the early twentieth century. See Societá Italiana di Fonotipia, *Societá italiana di Fonotipia (Milano)* (record catalogue) (Milano, 1907).

The high technical standard of Regordosa's cylinders, as well as his awareness of generic conventions, indicate that he was strongly concerned with quality, and he might have specifically targeted singers with studio experience or those who had proven to 'record well.' On the other hand, though, it is also plausible that singers saw Regordosa's home as a comparatively friendly setting they could acquire experience in before offering their services to *gabinetes* or gramophone companies:. Comparison of recordings by the same singers indeed suggests that some indeed progressively learned to adapt to the particularities of the recording medium,[54] suggesting that they came to Regordosa with comparatively little experience. For example, as recorded by Regordosa, Lucio Aristi's Escamillo, Avelina Carrera's Agathe, Juan Delor's Fernando and Adriana Palermi's Antonia[55] come across as musically limited and poorly phrased: each of the beats is stressed beyond necessary, thus compromising legato and shaping. There is a technical reason why this might have been the case: indeed, the difficulties in capturing lower frequencies in the earlier days of phonograph recordings often lead pianists to over-emphasize the beat in the in the left hand so that it could be audible.[56] It is therefore plausible that Regordosa's accompanying pianist was doing precisely this, with singers initially following his lead and only later learning how to keep their phrasing intact while ignoring the piano. Support to this hypothesis is provided by the fact that other recordings by Aristi, Carrera, Delor and Palermi indeed show an

[54] Katz, *Capturing sound,* 45; Simon Trezise, 'The recorded document: interpretation and discography', *The Cambridge Companion to Recorded Music*, eds. Nicholas Cook, Erik Clarke, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson and John Rink (Cambridge, 2009),186-209.
[55] For example (titles and reference numbers given as per the Biblioteca de Catalunya's catalogue): 'Canción del toreador en la ópera *Carmen.* Por el distinguido barítono sr. Aristi', CIL-85; 'Plegaria de *Fretschutz* (sic), cantada por la eminente diva Avelina Carrera', CIL-120 and CIL-121; 'Aria segundo acto *Favorita*, cantada por el barítono Sr. Don Juan Delors (sic)', CIL-44; 'Romanza de Antonia, de los *Cuentos de Hoffmann,* por la sra. Palermi', CIL-258.
[56] Inja Stanovic, *Reconstructing early recordings*, https://injastanovic.com/reconstructing-early-recordings/ (last accessed: 25th March 2019); Peres da Costa, *Off the record,* 17.

improved sense of legato and phrasing, suggesting that they might eventually have become more comfortable with the recording process and learned to ignore the particularities of the piano accompaniment, perhaps with directions from Regordosa himself.[57]

The repertoires

Mapping out the genres and sub-genres, as well as works, represented in Regordosa's collection offers further insight regarding how Regordosa might have conceived of his home recording activity. His collection mirrors, to a great extent, some of the choices and practices of the *gabinetes,* but it also extends those in significant respects that likely had to do with a desire to make the collection into a memento of his live music experience. The two most numerous genres, opera (129 recordings of individual pieces) and *género chico* (31), are straightforward to explain: they were extensively represented in the *gabinetes'* catalogues too, as these would be the preferred entertainment forms of their middle-class customer base, which Regordosa was part of as well.[58] *Zarzuela grande*, on the other hand (the full-length, 'serious' version of *zarzuela,* at its peak in the 1850s and 1860s and declining around 1900), numbered considerably fewer recordings in the *gabinetes'* catalogues and only three in Regordosa's collection. The operatic repertoire recorded is certainly in line with programming practices at the Liceu and the Teatro Real in Madrid at this time, and

[57] 'Canción de la *Donna russa* en la ópera *Fedora.* Por el distinguido barítono sr. Aristi', CIL-84; '*Flora:* habanera dedicada a la eminente diva Avelina Carrera, cantada por ella misma', CIL-124; 'Andante primer acto de *I Puritani,* cantado por el distinguido barítono don Juan Delor', CIL-36.

[58] *Género chico* was *zarzuela*'s most popular sub-genre around 1900, consisting of one-hour plays typically on a light or comic subject, with music often inspired on traditional songs rather than on *bel canto*. Although typically associated with Madrid, *género chico* was also very popular in Barcelona, and Regordosa might have well been a regular of the theatres along the Paral·lel avenue, as was a significant part of the Barcelona bourgeoisie.

with both the *gabinetes'* and Fonotipia's catalogues. For example, Regordosa only recorded two Mozart arias (from *Don Giovanni*), but did record French *grand-opéras* which, though not completely obscure, are not often performed today, such as those by Ambroise Thomas, Giacomo Meyerbeer, and even Jules Massenet's *Manon*. *Bel canto* from earlier in the 19th century is relatively well represented, but, next to French opera, the main staple in Regordosa's repertoire was *verismo* (including operas that have all but disappeared from the repertoire, such as Alberto Franchetti's *Germania*), as well as Wagner and Verdi (two each of *Ernani, Il trovatore, Aida, Otello* – but no *Traviata* except for a clarinet fantasy composed on themes from the opera).[59]

Several of the opera and *zarzuela* recordings were made by singers who sung the role on stage, and this provides further support to the notion that one of Regordosa's motivations was to capture his own live music experience, as well as helping in further refining chronology. For example, Regordosa recorded Avelina Carrera on ten occasions, one of which being 'Leise, leise' from *Der Freischütz* – which Carrera was singing at the Liceu in May 1903.[60] This would have indeed been a rare occasion in Barcelona, as *Der Freischütz* had been last staged in 1886, and so Regordosa is likely to have seized the occasion to procure himself a memento of the performance.

Further examples include Amelia González, who sang the title role of the successful operetta *Miss Helyett* in Barcelona in the spring and summer of 1901 and recorded it for Regordosa (perhaps around these dates too),[61] and José Sigler, who was announced

[59] 'Variaciones sobre un tema de *La Traviata,* por el sr. Nori', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-59.
[60] 'Espectáculos', *La Vanguardia,* 4 May 1903, 4.
[61] 'Espectáculos', *La esquella de la torratxa,* 5 July 1901, 4.

in the spoken introduction to his recording of *La Golfemia*'s 'Canción del abrigo' as 'creador de la parte' ('creator of the role').[62]

Next to those straightforward instances, though, we also find singers recording repertoire for Regordosa which whey would have not normally sung on stage. This complicates the connection that Regordosa (and his performers) saw between recording and live music, allowing us to expand our understanding of how the concept of performative fidelity worked in this context and connecting these recording sessions to domestic music-making practices Regordosa would have been familiar with as a member of the bourgeoisie. Indeed, the live music experiences that Regordosa wanted to capture did not only come from the stage, but also from more intimate settings.[63] Ramona Galán, an operatic lyric mezzo, and Marina Gurina, commonly regarded as a good *tiple* with the vocal skills to perform demanding *zarzuela grande* roles*,* recorded the same aria,[64] both recorded 'Voi lo sapete.' The former self-consciously claimed in the spoken introduction that she would 'try to sing it as best as I can',[65] while Gurina's recording reveals obvious vocal shortcomings, with high notes sounding particularly unstable. [67] Here again, though, as with the above-discussed example concerning Delor and others, we need to consider a multiplicity of

[62] The aria was simply a contrafacta of *La Bohème*'s 'Vecchia zimarra', with *La golfemia* being a parody of Puccini's opera. Parodies (of operas, *zarzuela grande* and other *género chico* works) were very common in *género chico*.

[63] For examples of synergies between domestic music-making and early recording technologies in the US context, see: Timothy D. Taylor, 'The Commodification of Music at the Dawn of the Era of 'Mechanical Music'', *Ethnomusicology,* 51 (2007), 281-305 (p. 281); Mark Katz, 'The amateur in the age of mechanical music', in *The Oxford Handbook of Sound Studies*, ed. Trevor Pinch and Karin Bijsterveld (New York2011), 459-478, at 460; Bowers, 'Creating a home culture for the phonograph', p. iv.

[64] 'Racconto di Santuzza en la *Cavalleria,* por la distinguida artista Sra. Gurina', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-207.

[65] 'Sr. Regordosa acepte este Racconto de *Cavalleria*, que me esmeraré en cantarlo lo mejor posible', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-300).

[67] 'Racconto di Santuzza en la *Cavalleria,* por la distinguida artista Sra. Gurina', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-207.

possibilities: we note, for example, that similar issues appear in some recordings of the *zarzuela* repertoire where Gurina would have presumably felt more at ease show similar issues, [68] while others do not.[69] 'Voi lo sapete' recording might hence simply reflect Gurina's efforts to adapt to the recording process, the difficulties of wax cylinders in recording powerful voices as Gurina's[70] or the problems inherent in doing digital transfers of recordings,[71] so we should be cautious in drawing conclusions in which concerns timbre and vocal quality. What comes across in the recording rather unambiguously, though, is Gurina's ability in delivering the text clearly and expressively. This was indeed one of the skills Gurina would be expected to display as a performer of *zarzuela grande,*[72] and so this recording, although indirectly, can give us valuable information performance habits in a genre that was much more scarcely recorded at this time than opera.

A further example of a singer recording outside his usual repertoire comes from tenor Ángel Constantí. Constantí, active in Barcelona and abroad, sang mostly lyric and

[68] 'Romanza de *La Trapera*, por la distinguida artista Srta. Gurina', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-202; 'Romanzas de *Gigantes y cabezudos*, por Marina Gurina', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-215.
[69] 'Aria de la *Doloretes,* por la distinguida artista Srta. Gurina', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-216.
[70] Peres da Costa, *Off the record,* 14.
[71] A conspicuous issue here is to determine the speed at which the cylinder would have been recorded, and hence determine the speed that should be used in the transfer: indeed, even though commercial standards in this respect existed (in Spain and elsewhere), they were not always consistently used, and there is certainly no evidence that amateur recordists stuck to them. For further discussion of cylinder speed, see Leech-Wilkinson, *The changing sound of music,* chapter 2 para 22-23; Adrian Poole, "Determining Playback Speeds of Early Ethnographic Wax Cylinder Recordings: Technical and Methodological Issues", *Ethnomusicology Forum*, 24 (2015), 73-101, at 74-5. Changes in speed would influence timbre and pitch; one method of determining whether the right speed has been used in a transfer is to compare the pitch of the transfer with the pitch the original was made at: in the case of the Regordosa collection, most cylinders are in the same key or within one tone (ascending or descending) of the original printed key. This is not conclusive proof, since the piece might not have originally been recorded in the printed key (singers often transposed pieces to suit their range) and/or temperature changes might have altered the original pitch of the cylinder; it can be ventured that most of the collection's transfer speeds are roughly correct, but it is still risky to draw broader conclusions about timbre based on the current transfers.
[72] Casares, 'Voz', 941.

spinto operatic roles on stage,[73] but he recorded Wagner both for Regordosa[74] and for the Barcelona *gabinetes* (*Lohengrin*'s duet for Manuel Moreno Cases[75] and a passage from *Die Walküre* for Sociedad Artístico-Fonográfica[76]). With the Liceu being a well-known Wagnerian hub, it is plausible that Constantí saw in recordings an opportunity to carve a niche for himself singing repertoire that he would not have performed on stage. Constantí's commercial Wagner recordings might have also led Regordosa to record him in that same repertoire, thus providing further evidence of Regordosa's awareness of *gabinete* recording practices.

Other vocal genres in Regordosa's collection are in line with the listening practices of the Spanish and Catalan bourgeoisie at the time and with the *gabinetes'* catalogues. There are twelve Neapolitan songs (a genre which stayed popular in Fonotipia's catalogue during the 1910s), but just one example of French or German-language art song (Schubert's *Ständchen*, by Josefina Huguet, which will be discussed later). Flamenco, although indigenous to Andalusia, was by 1900 sufficiently popular outside its place of origin that it was widely recorded by *gabinetes* in Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, and imported to cities throughout the country,[77] so it is not surprising that Regordosa recorded flamenco too.

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[73] 'Noticias de teatros', *La Vanguardia,* 10 September 1895; 'Crónica', *La libertad,* 20 July 1897, 2; 'Teatros', *El pueblo,* 15 August 1904, 3;

[74] All cylinders from the Biblioteca de Catalunya: 'Salida de *Lohengrin,* cantada por el distinguido tenor, señor Constantí', CIL-67; 'Despedida del cisne, de la ópera *Lohengrin,* cantado por el eminente tenor, señor Constantí', CIL-68; 'Cant de la primavera, de *La valquíria* d'en Wagner, cantat per l-eminent artista tenor Constantí', CIL-76 and CIL-77; 'Wagner, *Valquíria*, gran escena de la daga, cantada por el eminente tenor, señor Constantí', CIL-75'. All of these recordings were in Italian, as it was normally sung at the Liceu those days. His recordings for Regordosa also include verismo and French *grand-opéra* – in which he sounded more at ease than in the Wagner ones.

[75] 'Dúo de *Lohengrin',* Biblioteca Nacional de España, CL/87.

[76] 'Valkiria: Canto Primavera, por el tenor Constantí', held at Eresbil – Fondo Familia Ybarra, no reference number.

[77] Both the Ybarra family collection (based in Bilbao, now at Eresbil Archivo de la Música Vasca) and Pedro Aznar's (based in Barbastro, now at the Biblioteca Nacional de España) contain sizeable numbers of flamenco cylinders.

There is one particular area, though, where Regordosa significantly deviated from *gabinetes* practices, and that is in his commitment to record Catalan-language repertoire. There is no evidence that any *gabinetes* ever recorded vocal music in Catalan, and it is particularly surprising that the Barcelona ones never did, considering the nascent movement of recovery of Catalan language and culture that the local bourgeoisie was engaging in at the time. But the *gabinetes* industry in Barcelona was smaller, more fragmented and more precarious than the Madrid one, and lacking in many respects the leadership that we can find in the capital, their owners less likely to innovate with respect to the choices that had proven popular in Madrid. Prejudice also existed with respect to the use of the Catalan language in a context which was technological as much as it was artistic: indeed, while interest in Catalan-language literature and other cultural manifestations was pretty widespread among the Catalan bourgeoisie, Spanish was still seen by many as the language in which to conduct business or research: the advertisements and other publicity of the Barcelona *gabinetes* were exclusively in Spanish, and so were the spoken announcements at the beginning of the cylinders.[78]

Regordosa's collection thus provides us with a unique glimpse of the Catalan-language music movement that flourished in Barcelona in the early years of the twentieth century, including choral music sung by the Orfeó Catalá (of which more later) and solo songs (either traditional and arranged with piano accompaniment, or newly composer by the likes of Anselm Maria Clavé, Lluís Millet, Pep Ventura and Josep Borrás de Palau). Soloists featured include Emerenciana Wehrle and Amparo Viñas –

[78] Antoni Torrent i Marqués suggests that Spanish was the language predominantly used in Barcelona record shops until well into the twentieth century. Antoni Torrent i Marqués, 'Efectes secundaris dels discs a 78 rpm', *Girant a 78 rpm,* 2 (2004), 5-12, at 6.

both connected to the Orfeó and known mostly for these types of repertoires -, but opera and *zarzuela* singers of Catalan or Valencian origin (Josefina Huguet, Concha Dahlander, Andrés Perelló de Segurola, José Sigler, Marina Gurina) who spoke the language but rarely performed this repertoire in public, thus providing a further example along the lines of Gurina and Constantí above.

The numbers of instrumental recordings (15), on the other hand, are minimal compared to vocal ones, and this merits further examination. Scholars have repeatedly demonstrated that wax cylinders were more successful at recording voices than instruments at this stage,[79] and that brass instruments were among the few that could be recorded an acceptable standard: with brass band music being also popular in Spain at the time, *gabinetes* recorded it extensively (almost a third of surviving commercial recordings are of brass bands). Symphonic, chamber and solo instrumental music was a different matter altogether, and *gabinetes'* recordings in these repertoires are extremely scarce – probably both because instruments such as the violin and the piano were particularly difficult to record,[80] and because it was opera and *zarzuela* and not instrumental music that dominated the musical life of the Spanish bourgeoisie. Solo piano pieces, in particular, were often entrusted to the *gabinete*'s regular accompanist rather than professional concert pianists. Regordosa,'s recordings depart in this respect from the *gabinetes':* he did not record any brass bands (perhaps because this would have required logistical arrangements beyond his reach) and, although his collection of instrumental recordings is small, it shows a level of attention to these repertoires that goes beyond what was the norm for *gabinetes,*

[79] Leech-Wilkinson, *The changing sound of music,* chapter 2, para. 25.

[80] Peres da Costa, *Off the record,* 17; Trezise, 'The recorded document', 189.

including a piano improvisation by Isaac Albéniz and recordings by prominent Catalan pianists of the time Joaquim Malats and Frank Marshall, as well as of orchestral clarinettist Josep Nori. It is likely that these can be further connected to Regordosa's experience of domestic music-making.

A further instrumental genre that Regordosa never recorded is *sardana* – Catalan traditional music intended to accompany the dance of the same name. *Sardana* was extensively recorded by multinationals (Gramophone, Odeon, Pathé) from 1899, and so it is surprising that Regordosa never recorded it. Reasons might include the fact that *sardana,* being native to the Empordá area, was only starting to spread to the rest of Catalonia in the years around 1900,[81] the technical difficulties in recording larger groups of instruments (*sardana*'s *cobla* features eleven instruments, combining brass, traditional shawms and a fipple flute), and/or Regordosa's obvious interest in vocal rather than instrumental music.

Inside sound: announcements, phonographic form and performance practice

My discussion of Regordosa's above sheds some light on aspects of my initial questions. Namely, I have shown that some aspects of Regordosa's recordings suggest that he, in trying to achieve performative fidelity, was copying practices from the *gabinetes*, yet at the same time he deviated from widespread practices in ways that might at least be partly explained by a desire to further turn his recordings into mementos of his live music experience, both on stage and, more intriguingly, in the

[81] Antoni Torrent i Marqués, 'Una recerca interessant (1º part)', *Girant a 78 rpm,* 8 (2005), 9-11; Antoni Torrent i Marquès, 'Els primers enregistraments a casa nostra', *Girant a 78 rpm,* 11 (2008), 6-13; Antoni Torrent i Marquès, 'Sardanes a 78 rpm. Enregistraments durant els anys 1906-1907', *Girant a 78 rpm,* 15 (2009), 13-17.

domestic sphere. In this section, I look more closely at the sound in those recordings to further refine these tentative conclusions. I understand 'sound' in a broad sense here, not just limited to performance practice issues and, indeed, in subsections one and two I do not talk about performance, but rather about questions concerning the broader organization of spoken and musical sound within the cylinders. These can be understood as part of what Feaster calls the 'generic conventions' of recordings,[82] or 'patterns of adaptation to technology in performance of early recordings.' They include not only stylistic aspects of the performance per se, but also how the performance itself is framed and presented.[83]

I then discuss performance practice issues in recordings by three performers (Pepita Alcácer, Josefina Huguet and Orfeó Catalá). In these, I take into account both my previous discussion about Regordosa's unique way of understanding recordings and parameters that are by now well-established in the study of early recordings as documents of performance practice: portamento,[84] vibrato,[85] large- and small-scale tempo changes[86] and ornamentation.[87] By the very nature of musical performance, the methodology of these and similar studies often involves close listening of and comparison among early recordings, with a view to ascertain how these parameters were deployed for expressive purposes in a given context and what were, at a given place and time, the accepted conventions and boundaries for doing so, beyond

[82] Feaster, 'Framing the mechanical voice'.
[83] Feaster, ''The following record'', iv.
[84] Sarah Potter, 'Changing vocal style and technique in Britain during the Long Nineteenth Century' (PhD diss., University of Leeds, 2014), 103-113; Leech-Wilkinson, *The changing sound of music,* chapter 4, paras 10-15; chapter 7, para 5-6; Plack, 'The substance of style', 15-19, 44, 70.
[85] Potter, 'Changing vocal style and technique', 67-89; Plack, 'The substance of style', 12 and 19; Phillip, *Early recordings and musical style,* 99.
[86] Zicari, ''Ah! Non credea mirarti'; Zicari, 'Expressive tempo modifications'; Peres da Costa, *Off the record,* 195-249.
[87] Crutchfield, 'Vocal ornamentation in Verdi'.

individual style and preference. Here, I expand our understanding of these conventions and boundaries by analysing this new corpus recordings; in doing so, I also intend to exemplify the possibilities opened up by the Regordosa collection. Indeed, the collection allows us to hear performers, such as Alcácer, of whom there are no surviving commercial recordings, as well as pieces that were never recorded commercially on wax cylinder support. But it also allows us to hear performers we know from commercial recordings, such as Huguet and the Orfeó, under a different light: in the relaxed atmosphere of Regordosa's home rather than at the recording studio. Through careful comparison, this can not only help us further understand the individual styles of specific performers and how these fit within the expressive code of their time, but also to expand our understanding of the recording processes of the time, both at home and in the studio, and how these might have impacted on the sounds we hear today – which can in turn inform how we approach other recordings.

Announcements and the spoken word

Commercial cylinder recordings, in Spain and elsewhere, were typically preceded by a spoken announcement; this would normally include, as a minimum, the title of the piece, the name of the performer(s) and the recording label.[88] The overwhelming majority of Regordosa's recordings follow this convention, and a significant number, though not all, replace the the information about recording label with words to the effect that the cylinder was 'pressed for Ruperto Regordosa.' This suggests, again, that Regordosa was familiar with the conventions of commercial recordings. Most

[88] For a succinct history of changes in the format of spoken announcements in Columbia records, see Schamberger, 'Cylinder Records', 147-8.

cylinders also feature applause at the end, and often some bravoing too – as many *gabinetes* recordings did. Regordosa further followed *gabinetes* conventions in putting on an Andalusian accent in the announcements of flamenco recordings.[89] In other respects he adapted the announcements to the particularities of his own practice. When a piece of music was split into two or more cylinders, the announcement was repeated at the beginning of each of those, and in Catalan-language recordings the announcement was made in Catalan, which was certainly unheard of in *gabinetes* cylinders (Galician or Basque were not used in the announcements for the few recordings made in those languages).

A further trait that approaches Regordosa's cylinders to generic conventions of commercial recordings (while distancing them from other amateur recordings, such as Leandro Pérez's) is the fact that, between the initial announcement and the final applause, no sound other than the music itself is to be heard. There is no background noise or chatter, even though, as will be discussed shortly, other aspects of the recordings suggest that these would have been made in a relaxed atmosphere. This further confirms that Regordosa was consciously trying to produce recordings on a par with commercial cylinders, and it can also provide insights into the role that such announcements might have played in recordings from this era more generally. Feaster has convincingly argued that announcements did not simply serve a practical function, but were an integral part of the phonogenic enactment,[90] and he provides several explanations as to which function announcements might have served in this

[89] For example: 'Malagueña, cantada y acompañada por Paco el de Montilla, impresionada por el Sr. Regordosa en la Fonda de Oriente, en Córdoba', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-40.
[90] Feaster, "The following record", 305.

regard. Of these, two resonate particularly with Regordosa's practice. The first of Feaster's hypotheses is that announcements might have been intended as proof that the medium could handle the human voice.[91] In the case of Regordosa, we might add to that that the announcement proved that the recording was indeed being made in his home and not at a *gabinete*, as it was him, his wife or friends (a very reduced number, probably regulars in these sessions)[92] who made the announcement. This is not incompatible with the second hypothesis advanced by Feaster that is relevant here: that, in those cases where cylinders were announced by the singer himself or herself, this would have worked as a sort of autograph.[94] In this case, though, the autograph would have been from Regordosa himself and not from singers.

Notwithstanding Regordosa's obvious efforts to systematically follow *gabinete* conventions in how he organized sound while at the same time providing evidence of his own contribution, his approach to the recording process was likely flexible, and a few of the recordings do indeed reveal that they were made in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere typical of domestic music-making. In Aristi and González's recording of *Miss Helyett*, a group of friends is heard conversing after the music has finished; one of them recites a poem in a mocking tone, and the others subsequently congratulate him. Some singers (Aristi, Marina, Constantí) introduced their own recordings, whereas Galán exchanges pleasantries with Regordosa at the beginning of her recording of Carmen's seguidilla.[95] While we should not lose sight of the fact that

[91] Feaster, ''The following record'', 311.
[92] Apart from Regordosa, a further two male voices are heard in the announcements, both on several occasions; there is no indication as to who they might have been.
[94] Feaster, ''The following record'', 313.
[95] 'Seguidilla de la ópera *Carmen,* cantada por la distinguida artista Srta. Galán', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-307.

some of these might be deliberately crafted to produce an impression of spontaneity that was indeed crucial for the generic conventions of the recording to work, as indeed happened in some *gabinete* recordings, the overall effect is one of a relaxed atmosphere, less intimidating than the recording studio, where performance could be easily influenced by the performers' disposition. [96] We must thus consider the possibility that some of the differences we hear between Regordosa's and *gabinetes'* recordings of the same singer might be caused by the differences in the environment, and, by drawing on comparisons as well as written sources (as I will do subsequently) evaluate the extent to which each of these might reflect how the singer would have sounded on stage.

Cuts and edits

Even though the playable length of two-minute cylinders could be extended by slowing down the playing speed, a significant amount of opera and *zarzuela* numbers would still be too long, so cuts were a widespread commercial practice. Moreover, duets were often transformed into solos by extracting several substantial phrases from one of the duet partners and recording them one after the other. This influenced how listeners engaged with recordings. Gelatt claims that audiences in France, Germany and the US were put off by this practice and instead turned 'to the less exacting

[96] Peres da Costa, *Off the record,* 17.

entertainments.'[98] The short length of cylinders have influenced performance as well, although the evidence is more inconclusive here.[99]

Regordosa's collection can provide further insight into how these cuts and edits might have worked as generic conventions. Regordosa systematically cut arias and romanzas and also transformed duos into solo pieces, sometimes making exactly the same edits heard in commercial recordings, suggesting that he was familiar with those too. Nevertheless, he also departed from the *gabinetes'* practices in choosing to divide up long numbers between two or more cylinders, which was not standard among *gabinetes*.[100] Even though no sources from the *gabinetes* explain why this was the case, it is likely that splitting up a number would have been seen as unpractical (more expensive for customers, and the cylinders would need to be kept together), as well as being disruptive to the illusion of performative fidelity. Regordosa's choice, however, helps presents some of the repertoire under a new light, while suggesting that, even though the practice of speeding up tempi might not have been widespread, it might have certainly been used on some occasions. For example, when soprano Amalia Campos recorded the drinking song ('Es este Burdeos') from Manuel Fernández Caballero's *zarzuela Chateau Margaux,* she did so in a rather fast tempo, with little space for expressive changes in speed; the romanza thus comes across as rather mechanical.[101] Regordosa, nevertheless, made the decision to record Mrs Pastor de

[98] Gelatt, *Edison's fabulous phonograph 1877-1977,* 110.
[99] Zicari indeed convincingly argues, contradicting previous research, that there is no solid evidence that performers would have chosen faster tempi to fit pieces into cylinders: once longer cylinders and discs are introduced, tempi do not consistently slow down. See Zicari, ''Ah! Non credea mirarti'', 194.
[100] Out of the surviving commercial cylinders, there is only one instance of this practice: a recording from *Lohengrin* made by tenor Lamberto Alonso for the Valencia *gabinete* Blas Cuesta, split over two cylinders (FA60/214 and FA60/217 at Eresbil – Archivo de la Música Vasca). Catalogues, advertisements or the press do not mention this practice either, suggesting that it was not widespread.
[101] 'Vals de *Château Margaux',* Biblioteca Nacional de España, CL/4.

Hernández singing the romanza over two cylinders. This allowed the singer extensive use of *rubato* and flexible tempo changes, likely making the recording more akin to what would have likely been regarded as a good expressive performance on stage.[102]

Analysis of recordings 1: Género chico

One key strength of Regordosa's collection is the potential it holds for the largely unexplored field of *zarzuela* performance practice*:*[103] indeed, since the genre was practically only recorded in Spain at that time, Regordosa's recordings constitute a small but significant percentage (almost 15%) of all surviving phonograph recordings in the genre. The question of how *zarzuela* (especially *género chico*) recordings positioned themselves with respect to and came to evoke aspects of the live music experience is particularly relevant here, further developing notions of performative fidelity in genres other than opera and classical music. Indeed, while wax cylinders could capture, to an extent, singing abilities, these were not the only measure by which a performer was judged by audiences and critics. Being able to deliver text expressively, both in the dialogues and the singing, mattered at least as much, as did, variously, acting and dancing skills:[104] *género chico* is indeed one of the clearest examples of recordings erasing valuable information that audiences used to make

[102] 'Vals de *Château Margaux* cantado por la Sra. Pastor de Hernández', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-161 and CIL-162.
[103] The only monograph to deal with singing (or indeed performance practice) in *zarzuela* is Ramón Regidor Arribas, *La voz en la zarzuela* (Madrid, 1991). The subject has also been dealt with by Emilio Casares, 'Voz', *Diccionario de la zarzuela. España e Hispanoamérica,* ed. Emilio Casares (Madrid, 2008), vol. 2, 941-944.
[104] José Deleito y Piñuela, *Origen y apogeo del "género chico"* (Madrid, 1949), 68; Matilde Muñoz, *Historia de la zarzuela y el género chico* (Madrid, 1946), 245; Casares, 'Voz'.

sense of live performances.[105] Even though a systematic study of this question is yet to be undertaken, a cursory examination of available recordings evidence suggests that the *gabinetes* took steps in trying to bridge this gap. For example, recordings tend to emphasize clear and expressive delivery of the text, which would be key on stage as well. This could be achieved in several ways: by slightly shortening or elongating vowels to imitate the cadence of spoken speech,[106] by sacrificing vibrato or through favouring quasi-*parlato* ways of singing, or by emphasizing stresses and pauses.

Pepita Alcácer's recording of *La viejecita*'s 'Canción del espejo', by Manuel Fernández Caballero,[107] certainly falls within the practices and conventions what we observe in commercial recordings, and further confirms both Regordosa's commitment to making professional-level recordings and to providing singers with a relaxed atmosphere where they could sing at their best. Alcácer comes across as a singer with an excellent sense of text delivery, and her singing becomes almost recitative in the Andante gracioso (the second section) of the romanza (example 1.1). She also generally shows an impeccable sense of where the pauses fall in the text and emphasizes them accordingly. Her musical decisions in the Andante mosso can also be connected to a search for expressiveness. The four initial lines of the text are sung rather *rubato*, seeking the natural cadence of speech; in the last subsequent four lines, the third

[105] Leech-Wilkinson, *The changing sound of music,* chapter 3, para 95*;* Gitelman, *Scripts, grooves and writing machines,* 125.
[106] Philip, *Early recordings and musical style,* 7, 38 and 220; Peres da Costa, *Off the record,* 189; Zicari, 'Expressive Tempo Modifications in Adelina Patti's Recordings', 42; Renée Timmers, 'Vocal expression in recorded performances of Schubert songs', *Musicae Scientiae,* 11:2 (2007), 237-268.
[107] 'Cuplé de *La Viejecita,* por la distinguida artista Srta. Alcácer', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-361. Alcácer recorded six pieces for Regordosa (three on her own, three with a señor Fernández), all except for one (*La verbena de la Paloma*, premiered 1884) of relatively recent *género chico* successes, which would further confirm Regordosa's use of recordings as a memento of live performance. *La viejecita* was indeed a major success of the genre in 1897.

syllable of each (which is also the highest note in each of the phrases) is prolonged, which similarly gives the passage a speech-like quality (example 1.2).

Examples 1.1 and 1.2. In example 1.1, the comma and fermata in bar 2 as well as the portamento in bar 3 are not in the original score and have been included to reflect Alcácer's performing decisions. The same applies to the fermatas and the simplification of triplets into quavers in example 1.2.

These decisions, as well as the rather obvious tempo contrast between the Andante mosso and the Andante gracioso (dotted crotchet = 50 and crotchet = 33 respectively), are also in line with devices we find in many *gabinetes'* recordings for expressiveness. In particular, the fact that large-scale tempo contrasts tend to be more pronounced than those observed in gramophone recordings suggests that this might have been a strategy *gabinetes* used to compensate for some of the limitations that wax cylinders put on expressiveness (e.g. the lack of dynamic ranges, or the issues with recording certain pitches).

Our next step in trying to make sense of Alcácer's recording might be to situate it with respect to written sources about her singing, in an attempt to establish, on the one hand, whether the recording might be representative of her stage practice and, on the other, how her singing and text delivery were understood and appraised by *género chico* audiences and critics. We know that Alcácer was popular with audiences in Barcelona,[108] but she never rose to the level of successful *primeras tiples* in the Madrid

[108] 'Teatro de la Princesa', *El liberal,* 31 October 1895, p. 4; 'Calvo-Vico', *La Vanguardia,* 18 August 1893, p. 5; 'Teatro Romea', *El liberal,* 20 September 1895, p. 3.

theatres, who commanded high salaries and could make or break a new premiere: like many jobbing singers at the time, Alcácer combined main roles in provincial theatres[109] with supporting roles and summer appearances in Madrid.[110] Reviews of such singers' performances on stage tend to be scarce and unspecific, often offering generic praise without much detail. This makes it difficult to draw conclusions on whether what we hear on the cylinder would be an accurate representation of singing on stage, and whether it would have been regarded as a good performance by contemporaries. A review early in Alcácer's career conceded that she had a nice voice and could recite and move 'like a true actress', but sang 'mediocrely'.[111] Similarly, the fact that other reviews highlighted her acting but did not mention her singing could be interpreted to mean that the latter was not deemed worthy of mention.[112] Other published reviews did highlight Alcácer's singing, although in rather generic terms and without discussing her purely vocal skills; those reviewers might have thus appreciated Alcácer's ability to deliver text expressively when singing, rather than the beauty or technique or her voice.[113]

Alcácer's limited singing abilities are confirmed, to an extent, by some aspects of the recording: Alcácer indeed avoids interpolating high notes in suitable places, which at least another contemporary recording of the same romanza does.[115] As recorded in the

[109] Mari Luz González, 'Alcácer, Pepita', in *Diccionario de la zarzuela. España e Hispanoamérica,* ed. Emilio Casares (Madrid, 2008), vol. 1, 134. Diccionario de Zarzuela, vol. 1, Mari Luz González? See also: 'El teatro en provincias', *El arte de el teatro,* 15 January 1907, p. 23.
[110] 'Teatros', *El mundo artístico,* 63 (1901), p. 2; Ch. [full name unknown], 'Teatro de Maravillas', *El imparcial,* 1 August 1896, p. 3.
[111] *El liberal,* 20 September 1895.
[112] 'Teatros', *El mundo artístico,* 48 (1901), p. 2; 'Teatros', *El mundo artístico,* 63 (1901), p. 2; 'El teatro en provincias', *El arte de el teatro,* 15 January 1907, p. 23.
[113] 'Teatro Romea', *La Iberia,* 2 November 1896, p. 2; 'Romea', *El país,* 5 December 1896, p. 3; 'Romea', *La correspondencia de España,* 5 December 1896, p. 2.
[115] Blanca del Carmen for Viuda de Aramburo, '*La viejecita.* Canción del Espejo', Biblioteca Nacional de España, CL/434.

cylinder, the lower register does not seem to have been a strength of hers either, as her voice below G_4 becomes breathy and out of tune. If we compare Alcácer's recording with Lucrecia Arana's in 1914 for Gramophone,[116] the differences are obvious, even taking into account the improvements in technology: Arana – the first to sing the role of Pilar on stage – takes a similar approach to expressiveness, making some of the same decisions that Alcácer did, but her voice is more consistent in timbre and tuning.

A conclusion to draw from Alcácer's recording, her reviews and comparison with other recordings from the period is that what audiences, critics and singers regarded as 'good singing' in *género chico* was not always synonymous with having a beautiful, well-ranged or trained voice. Instead, different singers would have had different combinations of skills, with several of those being regarded as acceptable within the parameters and tastes of the genre; among these, though, the ability to deliver text expressively was likely seen as crucial. In this early stage, commercial recordings mirrored and accommodated this multiplicity of approaches, as is obvious from singers as different as Alcácer, Arana and Del Carmen recording *La viejecita*'s title role.[118] Regordosa's collection suggests that the Barcelona recordist was keen to copy conventions from *gabinetes* and to put expressive text delivery at the centre of his practice; his recordings can thus be used and compared with commercial ones to further ascertain how *género chico* singing practices could vary from singer to singer.

[116] Pascual Marquina and Lucrecia Arana (perf.), Manuel Fernández Caballero (comp.), 'Para morir de amor ciego / Brindis, canción de la viejecita (*La Viejecita*), *Compagnie Française du Gramophone* (Barcelona, 1910), 0263007, 0263008.
[118] This is the case for other roles too, such as *Gigantes y cabezudos*'s Pilar being recorded by singers as different as Lucrecia Arana, Blanca del Carmen, Marina Gurina, Pilar Pérez, Adela Taberner, Ascensión MIralles, Carlota Sandford and Felisa Lázaro.

Analysis of recordings 2: Josefina Huguet

With 23 recordings to her name, soprano Josefina Huguet is the most prolific performer in Regordosa's collection. Most of her cylinders are of light-lyric coloratura arias from French *grand-opéra*, *bel canto* and Verdi (*Vêpres siciliennes, Un ballo in maschera*), which were the roles on which Huguet, born in Barcelona in 1871, built her international career. Huguet also recorded rather extensively for *gabinetes* and for multinational companies. This makes her a particularly interesting case study, in that comparisons between recordings allow us not only to draw conclusions about Huguet's singing, but also to better understand the differences between commercial recordings and those made by Regordosa. For example, we might observe that Huguet's timbre does not sound dissimilar in her recordings of 'O luce di quest'anima' (from Donizetti's *Linda di Chamounix*), for G&T in 1902[119], Victor in 1907[120] (both on disc) and Regordosa,[121] which might confirm perceptions that Regordosa was indeed recording to high standards, with some caveats. Huguet's coloratura becomes blurry below G_4 in the Regordosa recording, and there are at least two possible explanations for this. The first of those has to do with the phonograph's limitations in recording lower frequencies: this is the most plausible one, since these weaknesses are not obvious in Huguet's Gramophone recordings. But there is also a possibility that this is indeed an accurate representation of Huguet's voice: in coloratura sopranos such as

[119] Josefina Huguet (perf.), Gaetano Donizzetti (comp.), '*Linda di Chamounix:* O luce di quest'anima', G&T (Barcelona, 1902-3), 53141 7241F.
[120] Josefina Huguet (perf.), Gaetano Donizzetti (comp.), 'O luce di quest'anima', Victor (Milan, 1907), 52529.
[121] 'Allegro del primer acto de la *Linda de Chamounix,* cantado por la eminente diva Josefina Huguet', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-328.

Huguet, the stereotypical 'white', open, virginal timbre and developed flute register that we hear in Huguet's recording often came at the expense of thinning the middle area of their voices.[122] Other than that, though, coloratura sopranos tended to record particularly well (compared, for example, to other varieties of sopranos with brighter voices),[123] and it is likely that both Huguet and Regordosa were well aware of that: cuts and edits in Huguet's repertoire are normally made so as to maximize opportunities to show her coloratura abilities and high range, often including generous interpolation of cadenzas. Huguet's recording of 'Ombra leggera', for example, starts from the last *Tempo primo*:[124] a mere 16 bars of texted music before it goes into *come scritto* coloratura, which Huguet tops up with an extended cadenza at the end that takes her to a high E flat above the staff. Cuts, on the other hand, are roughly similar to her commercial recordings for Gramophone on disc[125] and for Hugens y Acosta on cylinder[126], suggesting further connections between commercial practices and Regordosa's recordings in terms of how cuts were integrated into generic conventions.

A further area where comparisons between commercial and Regordosa recordings are illuminating concerns cadenzas. In each of the three recordings of 'O luce di quest'anima', Huguet interpolates a cadenza; these are different in each of the recordings, but show notable similarities, but are not completely identical (see

[122] Indeed, coloratura sopranos such as Huguet were a relatively new development in the operatic world in the early years of recording technologies, following the decline of the *drammatica d'agilitá*. See Joaquín Martín de Sagarmínaga, *Diccionario de cantantes españoles* (Madrid, 1997), 177.
[123] Trezise, 'The recorded document', 193.
[124] 'Vals de la sombra de la ópera *Dinorah,* cantada por la señorita diva Josefina Huguet', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-333.
[125] Josefina Huguet (perf.), Giacomo Meyerbeer (comp.), 'Ombra leggera, *Dinorah,* Meyerbeer', Compagnie Française du Gramophone (Barcelona, 1906), 053073.
[126] Josefina Huguet (perf.), Giacomo Meyerbeer (comp.), 'Ombra leggera, *Dinorah,* Meyerbeer', Hugens y Acosta (Madrid, between 1896 and 1905), held at Eresbil Archivo de la Música Vasca, FA60/018.

examples 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3). On a basic level, what this proves is that, in the early years of recording technologies, cadenzas were not yet standardized to the extent that they they later came to be. With cadenzas being regarded as a locus for extended solo expression, these would be composed from stock patterns to suit the performer's range.[127] Studying closely the similarities and differences between Huguet's cadenzas can also shed light on her preferred patterns and tentatively refine chronology further. Indeed, among the examples below, the G&T and the Victor cadenzas are the least similar, while the Regordosa one having elements of both. This could suggest that the Regordosa recording was made in the years between the G&T (1902-3) and the Victor one (1906), with Huguet replacing certain stock patterns with others in the intervening years.

Example 2.1. G&T cadenza.

Example 2.2. Regordosa cadenza.

Example 2.3. Victor cadenza.

Out of all the recordings Huguet made for Regordosa, the most unusual one is certainly Schubert's *Ständchen* (introduced as 'Serenata' and sung in Spanish, even though the text is not clearly intelligible).[128] Huguet, indeed, never recorded Lieder commercially. No *gabinete* recordings of the genre have survived either; Gramophone and other multinationals, though, did start to recod some of the best-known examples

[127] Will Crutchfield, 'Vocal ornamentation in Verdi: the phonographic evidence', *19th-century music,* 7:1 (1983), 3-54, at 5 and 7.

[128] '*Serenata* de Schubert, cantada por la eminente diva Josefina Huguet', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-346.

of the genre around these years, including *Ständchen*. Huguet's is certainly very different from what we might consider a good Lied performance today – but also, for example, from Julia Culp's 1914 recording for Victor,[129] one of the earliest to be documented. Huguet sings the song considerably slower (crotchet = 55, to Culp's 73), which forces her to skip the repetition; even accounting for potential difficulties with the technology, her middle-low and middle-high register are uneven in tone, and her F_5 in bar 23 sounds out of tune. Nevertheless, as is the case with Gurina's recording of 'Voi lo sapete', Huget clearly attempts to be expressive by adopting strategies she used in coloratura repertoire – subtle ornaments, portamento (especially at the end of phrases), and, in the opening phrase, a generous use of *tempo rubato*. Perhaps most surprisingly, she sings bars 50-52 an octave higher than written and interpolates an A_5 in the last two bars (see example 3.1). The recording is, ultimately, a rarity, but further helps to refine understanding of aspects of the collection. As with other examples of singers recording outside their repertoire, they point towards a relaxed atmosphere of domestic music-making, and – as in the case of Gurina singing 'Voi lo sapete' – they help us see Huguet's vocal habits in action – understood here, as defined by Plack, as 'habituated patterns of behaviours which form the substance of one's singing (…) and in turn, they become the substance of one's style."[130] Indeed, it is not surprising that, when asked to record unusual repertoire in a relaxed setting, Huguet resorted to the habits she routinely used on stage for her preferred repertoire. The 'Ständchen' recording is therefore not particularly valuable when it comes to investigating early twentieth-century Lieder performance, but it might be useful in setting out what a

[129] Julia Culp (perf.), Franz Schubert (comp.), *Serenade* (Camdem, NJ, 1914), 74431.
[130] Plack, 'The substance of style', 19.

singer like Huguet would have regarded as her usual palette of expressive devices and how she would have displayed them in recordings.

Example 3.1

Analysis of recordings 3: Orfeó Catalá

Regordosa recorded the Orfeó Catalá on five occasions. Apart from its role as a cultural hub for the promotion of Catalan culture, the Orfeó attained international renown for its performances of the canonic choral-symphonic repertoire. The Orfeó was recorded by Gramophone as early as 1899 on their first visit to Barcelona,[131] and then again regularly during the next years, with a full batch of recordings in Catalan released in 1916,[132] as well as forays into the standard repertoire, such as Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* in 1927 for Victor.[133] The Orfeó was, however, never recorded by *gabinetes,* who rarely recorded choral music other than opera and especially *zarzuela* choruses accompanied by a piano. Regordosa's recordings are therefore interesting here in that they not only document a Catalan-language vocal tradition never captured on the phonograph before: they can also help us understand the difficulties the phonograph posed when recording choirs, and how Regordosa tried to solve those to create the illusion of performative fidelity.

[131] Kelly, *The Gramophone Company Limited.*
[132] Gramophone/His Master's Voice, *Orfeó Catalá* (catalogue), 1916 (Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya, Cat 8/11).
[133] John R. Bolig, *The Victor Red Seal Discography vol. II. Double-sided series to 1930* (Denver, 2004).

Regordosa's recordings of the Orfeó show that he must indeed have struggled, and the results are, overall, among the least satisfactory in his collection. A cursory listening to any of his choral recordings reveals that he did not record the whole Orfeó, which counted on these days a membership of about a hundred, but a much smaller number – although not as small as the *gabinetes'* recordings of opera and *zarzuela* choruses, which were often made with no more than five or six performers. With these relatively high numbers,, the four-part texture comes across as rather undistinct in Regordosa's recordings, with the text being practically unintelligible. Nevertheless, if we compare Regordosa's recordings of Janequin's *Le chant des oyseaux* (translated here as *L'aucellada*)[134] and the Catalan-language song *El cant de la Senyera*, by Lluís Millet,[135] we can hypothesize that Regordosa might have progressively perfected his techniques in recording choirs, probably by trial and error. In *Le chant des oyseaux*, the dynamics and tempo are kept steady. In particular, the last section, where each of the parts imitates different varieties of birdsong, is of limited effectiveness: it would have likely necessitated the articulation to be bolder, the consonants sharper, for it to achieve the effect it would have on stage: *L'aucellada* was indeed one of the Orfeó's most popular pieces at the time. 'El cant de la Senyera', on the other hand – even though the cylinder is now considerably deteriorated –, shows an attempt at recording dynamics which might come across as rudimentary, but is still significant for this era, including an effective piano subito before the last phrase, which considerably improves expressiveness. As is the case with commercial recordings of the time, this might have

[134] '*L'Aucellada* de Janequin; cantada per l'Orfeó Catalá', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-105.
[135] '*El Cant de la Senyera* per l'Orfeó Catalá', Biblioteca de Catalunya, CIL-106.

been achieved by having performers moving closer and away from the horn at specific moments.

Conclusion

In the conclusion, I go back to my original questions: what does Regordosa's collection reveal about home recording practices in the era of the phonograph? And how should these practices inform future research into the collection specifically focused on performance practice issues? I would like to preface this conclusion reiterating two necessary caveats: on the one hand, sources, both aural and written, for the study of this culture are scarce, which makes it difficult to conclusively reject or confirm any hypothesis. On the other, there are reasons to think that Regordosa might have been an outstanding recordist – both in terms of the sheer amount of cylinders he produced and of the technical and artistic attention he put into his recordings. Hence, the conclusions we might draw from his recordings might not always be easily applicable to Miralles Segarra, Pérez or Aznar, and it is likely that they are not either to the multiplicity of amateur recordists operating in Spain or elsewhere at the time.

One initial observation we might draw from Regordosa's collection is the rather surprising rapidity with which generic conventions implemented from *gabinetes* might have been adopted by some amateur recordists. None of Regordosa's recordings suggests that he might have experimented with less formalized, more rudimentary ways of presenting and organizing sound typical of earlier, non-commercial experiments. Instead, they all follow, to the extent I have described above, the generic conventions used by the *gabinetes*, with the caveat that Regordosa did not only

capture and reflect his experience of live music on stage, but also in the privacy of his home, as was common with individuals from his social class at the time. This introduces nuance to the processes of phonographic literacy and performative fidelity that dominated the early years of recorded sound history, suggesting that once improvements to the phonograph made it suitable to enter the domestic sphere, the commercial and cultural changes that accompanied it and that gave rise to the recording as an aesthetic product and commercial artefact unfolded relatively quickly. This makes Regordosa's recordings easy and difficult to read at the same time. They are easy to read because we can assume that Regordosa's recording practices were part of more widespread processes by which recording labels, performers and audiences active in the early years of recording technologies came to develop specific recording practices that crystallized into a certain notion of performative fidelity. But they can also be difficult to read, because, while we know that each of Regordosa's recordings would have contribute to these processes, we often do not know exactly how each of them did so. Specific sonic features in the recordings must then be discussed and contextualized within what we know about recording practice in Spain and elsewhere, and also within Regordosa's collection as a whole, with the caveat that, as suggested above, the lack of evidence in some respects might make it difficult to confirm or refute hypothesis. While we must bear in mind that each of these recordings was unique and thus uniquely shaped and impacted by the multiplicity of factors operating here and thus each recording must be discussed individually, I would like to end this article with three general lessons drawn from my analysis above, capturing some of the respects in which Regordosa's collection (and, perhaps, other amateur recordings) differed from commercial recordings of his time. Firstly, we must consider

how the different types of settings (i.e. the recording studio versus a private household) might have influenced performer's disposition, and so whether we can consider, on this basis, some recordings as more representative than others in capturing a performer's abilities as heard on the stage. Secondly, a private setting such as Regordosa's might have made performers more likely to record pieces outside their normal repertoire. While we must be cautious in using these to draw conclusions about stage performance, they can be invaluably helpful in further understanding issues of individual style and habits, and how performers developed a palette of expressive possibilities they could draw upon according to the context. Thirdly, Regordosa's collection gives us a rare glimpse into a specific recordist's strengths and weaknesses, and (even in the absence of precise dates) how these might have improved over time. This can then help us understand the learning processes of other recordists, professional or amateur, and how these might have impacted, for better or worse, what we hear in specific recordings.