

Tribute speech to Salvador Giner (La Glorieta) May 22th 1921

I am going to talk to you about Maestro Giner, his talent and his art.

I speak in Spanish because that is how all men who speak this language associate themselves with the homage, and my only regret is that I do not possess a universal language in which to pay homage to this excellent musician and that in this language his glories should be sung throughout the world.

I have been a friend and admirer of Maestro Giner. We did not see each other often, only from time to time, but there were currents of intense sympathy between us, and a spiritual kinship, which determined our affection and my admiration.

We both belonged to the same family, and although we had two very different conceptions of how life should be structured and of what lies beyond death, it is certain that he and I were on common ground. He, as a glorious master, and I, as a beginner, because at that time I was still unknown to many people. We went to a place and sought each other out, always finding ourselves in front of art.

All the most disinterested, most generous manifestations can be developed in the field of art. Only spirits that are not cultivated by civilisation cloud the greatness of these artistic emotions with petty passions.

When we got together, which was very occasionally; we used to talk about Beethoven, the most exalted embodiment of a musical genius to mankind.

I recall that some years ago, in a tribute paid to me in the Teatro Principal, some of his works were to be played by the orchestra, and that venerable maestro had the artist's trait to appear in the theatre and conduct it, in spite of the indications that had been made to him against this act. He, who affectionately called me "Visantet", did not want to miss the event.

It is with great joy and satisfaction that I come here today to glorify the Valencian musical genius, Don Salvador Giner.

This festival is dedicated to the artistic excellence of his works.

I have been an admirer of the great maestro, and this admiration had for me something of nostalgia, something of melancholy.

This man was a great musician, more than a musician of the brain, he was a musician of the heart; he knew how to communicate emotions of tenderness and intense enthusiasm with his sounds like no one else.

He had enough substance in his genius to be a celebrity in all the countries of the world, but his productions are hardly known outside Spain.

Do you know why he did not leave Valencia? Because Maestro Giner was also a victim of the siren's song. He preferred this quiet life, the charm of this land and this sun, the perfumes of our fields to world glory.

He listened to the siren's songs and the siren embraced him.

We artists must think of and love Valencia, intensely, madly, carry its image always engraved in our souls, but not to get seduced by its charms, and live far away from our beloved city, devoted to art.

Like what happens in astronomy, it happens to us artists. Planets with their own light and other opaque stars with reflected light occupy the heavens.

These opaque stars take light and warmth which is life from those who have light and warmth of their own, and as the years go by these stars, which give light and warmth and receive nothing in return, will eventually become opaque.

This is why artists must travel, must be constantly in action, in order to receive their light and warmth from those stars that shine with their own light in the field of literature, music and painting. Only in this way, through artistic or literary exchange, will they be formed and become stars of the first magnitude.

If Don Salvador Giner had travelled, had fought, had constantly put into action his gifts as a great musician, his productions would have been heard and appreciated by the great public.

But that venerable old man, who, clinging to his land, used to walk on rainy days through the cloisters of the Patriarch, should not have begrudged the world his genius, but should have gone out for it and spread his treasure so that everyone would know and appreciate him.

One only has to look at the few times his music has been heard abroad.

It was only when the great maestro Mancinelli became acquainted with Giner's work that he advised him to do something great for orchestra, and it was to this suggestion that we owe *The Feast of Balthasar*, a work that has since been played in all countries.

In the world of music, the same happens in astronomy, as with the lucky astronomer who discovers a new planet in his observations and shortly afterwards, when he has devoted himself to the study of its characteristics, it disappears. Maestro Giner's theatrical works were premiered but did not spread as widely as necessary to be prestigious, due to the artistic isolation in which he lived.

In spite of this isolation, his music ended up imposing itself.

Valencia's prestige in the field of art is growing every day.

Valencia is a gigantic matron, whose bare feet are submerged in the foam of the Mediterranean, while her body rests reclining on her perfumed gardens and her head is wrapped in a splendid crown of white clouds. This matron is our mother, who, caring for her children, her artists, takes them little by little and places each one in his or her place, some on her knees, others on her shoulders.

That matron placed the musician Giner in her heart, because the heart of Valencia is music that resonates and sings and the great maestro, to that vital movement, knew how to contribute with the magical notes of *Nit d'albaes* and *Es chopá... hasta la Moma*.