



- [Clarinet Anthology](#)
- [Previous ClarinetFest Presentations](#)
- [Electronic Archived Issues](#)
- [Clarinet Journal Back Issues](#)
- [Links](#)

Miguel Yuste: His Works for Clarinet and His Influence on the Spanish Clarinet School of Playing in the Twentieth Century

ClarinetFest® 2007
Malena McLaren

The popularity of the clarinet in Spain is second only to that of the guitar.¹ There is a rich tradition of clarinet playing that is accompanied by an equally rich repertoire of music for the clarinet by Spanish composers. The works for clarinet and piano by Miguel Yuste (1870-1947) are among this little-known repertoire.

In the early twentieth century, it was thought that Miguel Yuste wrote over one hundred works for clarinet. However, current research suggests that this is incorrect. What is known is that seven works for clarinet and piano have been published. Unfortunately, one is out of print. While relatively few of Yuste's works are available to the general population, both he and his music are pivotal in the establishment of the strong clarinet tradition for which Spain is presently known. In his thirty years as the clarinet professor at the *Real Conservatorio Superior de Música de Madrid* (1910-1940), Miguel Yuste's music and pedagogical ideas became, and continue to be, among the foundations of Spanish clarinet playing.

My research focuses on each published work and presents current research on the works composed for clarinet by Miguel Yuste. For this presentation, I will first introduce a brief history of Spain's music, as it pertains to the clarinet, and the social climate in which it developed. I will then discuss the clarinet pedagogy at the Madrid Conservatory and Miguel Yuste's influence within that pedagogy. And finally, I will discuss Miguel Yuste's compositional influences and how they are evident in two of his works for clarinet and piano, *Estudio Medodico and Vibraciones del Alma*.

Spain has always had a strong sense of regional identity. While the official language of Spain is Castilian, several fiercely individualistic regions reside within Spain's borders. Perhaps contributing to the individualism and intentional preservation of its regional traditions is--what Beatrice Edgerly observes in her 1942 book on the History of Musical Instruments as--Spain's "ever-changing panorama of history."² From the Celts and Greeks, to the Romans and Arabs, Spain has had a consistent history of invasion and occupation. An unfortunate effect of the constant threat of invasion is extended periods of economic and political instability. However, this "ever-changing panorama of history" has provided a collage of cultural influence throughout Spain's history.

Early nineteenth-century Spain saw the Napoleonic Wars, Civil Wars, revolutions, and *coup d'états*. The political environment created a crisis, both economically and intellectually, which prompted many composers and musicians to leave Spain.³ The music profession suffered countless losses due to the severe lack of musical organizations and virtually no systematic music education. Outside her borders, the general impression around Europe was that Spain was "musically backward."⁴

By the 1830's Spain began to emerge from this turbulent environment. The Madrid Conservatory, Spain's first conservatory, opened in 1830—and Spain's first musical societies formed in the 1860's. This is the environment into which clarinetist, composer, and conductor, Miguel Yuste, was born.

The clarinet was introduced to Spain by the 1770s.⁵ Beginning in 1785, instrument makers Joseph Estrella and Fernando Llop advertised clarinets in the daily newspaper.⁶ The earliest known Spanish-made clarinets were five-keyed C clarinets (B-Liège, A 3104). These were made by Luís Rolland of Madrid c. 1800. Prior to this time, clarinets were imported from England.

By the time Miguel Yuste began his studies at the Madrid Conservatory in 1883, Antonio Romero had retired and the use of the Romero-system clarinet was no longer mandatory. Yuste likely played on a full Boehm-system clarinet, which includes a low E-flat key for the right-hand little finger.⁷ The low E-flat key is an idea carried over from the Romero-system clarinet.

The use of the low E-flat key is no longer common in present-day Spain, although these clarinets “are still in use in some wind bands [today],” according to Carlos Casadó, bass clarinetist with the National Orchestra of Spain.⁸ There was a revival of these full Boehm-system clarinets in Spain in the late 1970’s into the 1980’s. By the 1990’s, however, the normal Boehm-system (which omits the low E-flat key) was most common.⁹ Regardless of the instability of the development in the clarinet itself, there were many opportunities for clarinetists to perform in Spain in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The tradition of the wind band in Spain dates back to the 1850’s.¹⁰ When the Municipal Band of Madrid was founded in 1909, it had a total of 88 members. Additional playing opportunities included the Opera Orchestra at *Buen Retiro* Gardens, the *Teatro Real*, the National Orchestra, the Madrid Symphony Orchestra, and the Society of Chamber Music. Miguel Yuste was a member of each of these groups.

The Madrid Conservatory was founded in 1830 after María Cristina came from Naples to Madrid to marry Ferdinand VII in 1829. According to Julián Menéndez, Yuste’s star pupil and prominent Spanish clarinetist in the 1930’s and 40’s, “With the founding of the Royal Conservatory of Music, a general awakening in musical interest occurred.”¹¹ Through her support and funding, the Madrid Conservatory was modeled on Neapolitan music schools. Its first director was Italian opera singer, Francesco Piermarini.¹² Since its founding, the Madrid Conservatory has changed names and locations six times, even spending 73 years located in the Teatro Real.

The first clarinet professors at the Madrid Conservatory were Pedro Broca (from 1830 to 1836) and Magin Jardín (from 1830 to 1857).¹³ By 1849, Antonio Romero had written his Clarinet Method Book and had joined the faculty. Julián Menéndez also observes that, “It was only with the appearance of Antonio Romero...that interest in clarinet playing received a great and needed stimulus.”¹⁴ *His* was the first clarinet method book by a Spanish clarinetist to be used at the Conservatory, and it is still used today. When Romero began teaching at the Conservatory in 1849, his method book became an important addition to the course of study. After his retirement in 1876, his method book remained a staple in the Spanish clarinet school. Romero’s clarinet course of study at the Conservatory remained unchanged for nearly 25 years. In 1909, Miguel Yuste became the clarinet professor and instituted a much needed update to the clarinet studies at the Madrid Conservatory.

According to Julián Menéndez, “Up to the time of Yuste’s appointment, the teaching of the clarinet in Spain was somewhat old-fashioned and not sufficiently extensive or progressive to encompass the difficulties cropping up continually in the new orchestral works of the composers of the [beginning of the twentieth century].”¹⁵ Yuste responded to the need for change by reorganizing the course of clarinet study at the Conservatory. Pamela Weston notes in her *Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past* that, “[there was a] systematic curriculum for a six-year course of study based on works from the Romero and Klosé tutors.”¹⁶ Julián Menéndez further explains in a 1953 article that each course was comprised of three terms in which Yuste “began to incorporate new works of significant clarinet pedagogues.”¹⁷ “General studies were drawn from the works of Carl Baermann, Buteaux, Krakamp, Kroepsch, Magnani, Stark, and Wiedemann. Also included were staccato studies by Aumont, the Gambaro caprices, and all the Paris Conservatory test pieces.”¹⁸ By the 1950s, this plan for the course of clarinet studies was “officially adopted by all state-supported conservatories.”¹⁹

Miguel Yuste Moreno was born in Alcala del Valle in Cadiz, Spain in June of 1870. His musical studies began with José Chacon at the San Bernardino Orphanage in Madrid, where he was taken at the age of eight. The San Bernardino Orphanage fostered the children’s artistic education by organizing a wind band in which they played and learned an instrument. In 1883, at the age of thirteen, Yuste began studying clarinet with Manuel González and became his “star pupil.”²⁰ He would later succeed González at the Madrid Conservatory. In 1885, Yuste won the first chair position with the Royal Corps of Halberdiers. Two years later, he won first prize at the Madrid Conservatory—and quickly became a steadily employed clarinetist. In 1887, the same year he won first prize at the Conservatory, Yuste sat principal chair at the Buen Retiro Gardens. In 1889, he completed his clarinet studies at the Conservatory and became the solo clarinetist in the Concert Society Orchestra and the orchestra at the *Teatro Real*. He began as the third clarinet in the Teatro Real, but was moved to first chair by the conductor, Luigi Mancinelli, in the middle of a rehearsal. He remained as principal clarinetist from that point on. Although Mancinelli later made several offers for Yuste to teach and perform in Italy, Yuste stayed in Madrid.²¹

In 1890, Miguel Yuste was a member of both the National Orchestra and the Chamber Music Society. He gained public and critical recognition with performances of Brahms’s and Mozart’s quintets. Unfortunately, the Chamber Music Society disbanded in 1904, but Miguel Yuste was given the esteemed position of clarinetist for the Royal Chapel the same year. Also in 1904, he helped to form the Symphony Orchestra of Madrid.

In 1909, Yuste succeeded his teacher, Manuel González, at the Madrid Conservatory. In his 30-year tenure, Yuste made significant reforms in the clarinet course of study at the Madrid Conservatory and became a significant influence on Spanish clarinetists. Joan Enric Lluna (one of Spain's most prominent clarinetists today, who has recorded several of Yuste's works) states that, along with Antonio Romero and Julián Menéndez, Miguel Yuste "could be regarded as [one of] the 'fathers' of Spanish clarinet playing." 22

Modern-day Spanish clarinetists Pedro Rubio, José Tomás Pérez, and Enrique Pérez Piquer have stated that the Madrid Conservatory library does not have many of Miguel Yuste's works and suggest that anything that has not yet been published remains with Yuste's surviving family members. In the course of his esteemed career, Miguel Yuste married and had two children. His oldest son, also named Miguel, played clarinet with the Madrid Municipal Band. According to information from Enrique Pérez Piquer, Miguel Yuste married a second time, but the names of both wives and the second child are currently unknown.²³ Members of the Yuste family still live in Madrid, and future interviews with the family by Pedro Rubio are in the planning stages—in hopes of learning new information about Yuste's life and precisely how many works he wrote for the clarinet.²⁴ Regardless of the number of works, Enrique Pérez Piquer comments that "Yuste's contribution to the clarinet literature, although not prolific, is a challenge capable of compromising the most virtuosic player.... [additionally], Miguel Yuste exerted a major influence on the musical education of all the clarinetists who have occupied principal positions in all the musical groups of Madrid" 25

Miguel Yuste's works were the beginning of an "educational process" from which many renowned Spanish clarinetists came.²⁶ Perhaps most notably, Julián Menéndez (1896-1975) and his brother Anthony, both founding members of the Spanish National Orchestra, were educated by Miguel Yuste. José Taléns Sebastián, solo clarinetist in the now disbanded Filharmonic Orchestra of Madrid and the Madrid Municipal Band, is another example. Similarly, Leocadio Parras, soloist with the Spanish National Orchestra until his death in 1973, is a notable example of Miguel Yuste's influence on the music education of Spanish clarinetists in the twentieth century.

In a recent interview with one of Miguel Yuste's students, Carlos Casadó notes that, "José Avilés (89-year-old former student of Miguel Yuste) remembers Yuste saying: 'I do not know harmony, but I have the melody and the harmony in my head. I imagine how it should sound, and I try to write it.'"²⁷ The sounds that Yuste imagined likely would have been heavily influenced by the music that was a part his daily life. It is known that Miguel Yuste was principal clarinetist with the *Teatro Real* beginning in 1889, and the *Teatro Real* is known to have been a common performance venue for the popular genre known as the *zarzuela*. In addition to frequent performances of *zarzuelas*, traditional Spanish folk songs were a part of daily life. It is, therefore, highly likely that the influences of the *zarzuela* and Spanish folk music in general permeated Yuste's musical vocabulary. Since Yuste himself did not approach his works from a tonal harmony standpoint, I will discuss Yuste's works within the influences of the *zarzuela* and Spanish folk music characteristics.

The *zarzuela* is a form of Spanish musical drama that is characterized by singing and dancing interspersed with spoken language. The term originally comes from the Spanish word for a bramble bush, *zarza*. In the 1650s, the term, *zarzuela*, was used to describe short musical plays, burlesque in nature, which were organized to entertain the king and his guests at the newly renovated *Palacio Real de la Zarzuela*. 28

Music was an important aspect of the *zarzuela* structure from its inception, but the amount of singing as opposed to speaking was not standardized. However, by the middle of the seventeenth century, the *zarzuela* exhibited strong influence of Italian opera, and entirely sung programs were becoming more common. The *zarzuela*, (which is still performed today in Spain), became such a popular genre by the last decade of the nineteenth century that eleven theaters in Madrid performed *zarzuelas* only. Miguel Yuste played regularly in one of these theaters, the *Teatro Real*.

While there is much regional diversity in Spanish folk music, it is understood that several musical characteristics are common throughout the varying regional folk music of Spain. With influences from France to Hungary, these characteristics have combined to create a recognizable Spanish folk music quality in the pieces in which they are heard, including those of Miguel Yuste. They can be categorized into rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic characteristics.

Three typical rhythmic characteristics of Spanish folk music are found throughout Yuste's clarinet music. These are labeled in the *New Grove Dictionary* as the "unmeasured style", the "guisto-syllabic style", and the use of dance rhythms. The "unmeasured style" is defined by the use of a "flexible succession of tempos" combined with heavily ornamented melodies which maintain fixed points of tonal reference. The "guisto-syllabic style" is defined by the use of alternating binary and ternary meters. The third rhythmic device that is commonly found in Yuste's clarinet music is the use of dance rhythms. Sections containing repetitive, dance-like rhythms usually follow a section using the "unmeasured style." These categories are most useful as "points of reference" and can overlap with ease.²⁹ Another common rhythmic device is the use in Spanish folk songs of the accent on the ultimate or penultimate beat of a phrase.³⁰ This rhythmic device is most often used

within a melodic context.

The melodic characteristics combine with the rhythmic elements to create some of the more typically recognizable qualities of Spanish folk music. The melodies are not typically tonal, are often chromatic, and sometimes have intervals of an augmented second.³¹ Also common, is the use of a terraced downward motion in the melodic line similar to falling thirds, but with significantly more chromaticism. There is a general tonal and modal ambiguity to many Spanish folk melodies. The *harmonic* characteristics of Spain's folk music exhibit a similar ambiguity.

Many of the harmonic elements used in Spanish folk music are within the bounds of traditional classical harmony.³² However, due to early Roman and liturgical influences, modal characteristics are commonly used in tandem with classical harmonies.³³ As in the melodies, chromatic passages are common; and, there is occasional use of parallel thirds. These harmonic attributes combine with the previously mentioned rhythmic and melodic elements to create a distinctive Spanish folk music sound. Each of these folk music characteristics is found in the works for clarinet and piano by Miguel Yuste.

All of Yuste's available works for clarinet and piano are written for B-flat clarinet and are one movement in length. According to *Mundimúsica Ediciones*, publishers in Madrid, none of Yuste's available manuscripts supply dates of composition.³⁴ However, it is known that most of his works for clarinet were written for auditions and exams at the Madrid Conservatory. Therefore, one can assume that the majority of his works for clarinet were written between 1909 and 1936.³⁵ Yuste's works can be classified as Neo-Romantic and, according to clarinetist Joan Enric Lluna, are designed to "highlight the technical abilities of the performer... with beautiful melodies that suit the clarinet well." ³⁶

The first piece I will discuss today is the *Estudio Melodico*, op. 33. (You can see in your handout on page 6 that there is an edition published in 1972. However, in conversation with Pedro Rubio last year, he believes there is a publication that dates from the 1920s.)

According to Enrique Pérez Piquer, *Estudio Melodico* is based on a theme by Italian clarinetist and composer, Luigi Bassi—with the development section by Miguel Yuste.³⁷ Piquer does not specify the origins of this theme. Bassi was known to write paraphrases on opera themes for clarinet and piano, and Yuste pays homage to the paraphrase tradition with this work. The piece follows basic sonata form with a brief (four-measure) introduction. The exposition is in g minor, the development moves to the relative major key, Bb major, and the recapitulation returns to g minor. While the basic harmony is tonal, there is frequent use of chromaticism both harmonically and melodically. Many of the Spanish folk music characteristics discussed appear in *Estudio Melodico*. For example, phrases often end with an accent on the penultimate note or beat.

There is a repetitive rhythmic pattern combining long and short note values that occurs from the beginning of the piece. Additionally, the melody is heavily ornamented and chromatic, while it often returns to a point of tonal reference. The opening melody of the development illustrates this characteristic.

This work is rhythmically complex in the clarinet part, especially in the recapitulation, and requires an advanced level of technique. There are several large interval leaps that occur within sixteenth and thirty-second notes. For example, a two-octave leap from throat-tone F to altissimo F occurs in a thirty-second note passage in the development section. The melody itself is not technically challenging, but the recapitulation is significantly more difficult, due to awkward, non-scalar ornamentation figures. The Spanish folk music characteristics are evident throughout *Estudio Melodico*. While it sounds improvisatory in sections, Yuste has very clearly written each note and rhythm. The melodies in this piece are quite memorable, and are very typical of Spanish folk music. *Estudio Melodico* is probably Yuste's most commonly performed and well-known work outside of Spain today.

The second piece I will discuss is *Vibraciones del Alma*, op. 45.

Enrique Pérez Piquer comments that "with [*Vibraciones del Alma*, Yuste] wanted to add to the National clarinet repertoire [a] work worthy to be played in the big concert halls."³⁸ Piquer also comments that this work, along with *Capricho Pintoresco*, expertly combines creativity and technical ability. While most of Yuste's works were written for auditions or exams, these two works were likely written with a larger audience in mind.

This piece is organized into three different sections. It is similar to a one-movement concerto with three clear sections. *Vibraciones del Alma* begins with the first section in E-flat major, and, typical of Spanish folk music and Yuste's works, there is frequent use of chromaticism within the bounds of tonal harmony. A key change to G major signifies the second section. Also typical of the Spanish folk music influence, the second section is in a different meter, 2/4. The accompaniment figure to the second section demonstrates another Spanish folk music characteristic in its use of parallel 3rds.

The third section remains in 2/4, but the key changes to g minor. The melody of the third section is quite lyrical, and the harmonic rhythm implies a slower tempo. The minor third interval in the fourth measure of the

accompaniment—and the accent on the penultimate beat of the melody—further imply the influence of Spanish folk music.

While the coda is extensively chromatic in both the clarinet and piano parts, it solidly ends the piece in G major. *Vibraciones del Alma* is one of the more difficult of Yuste's works, in my opinion. However, while the clarinet part is challenging, it is not terribly difficult to put together with piano. In performing Yuste's works (not unlike performing other works), it is important to convey the style and spirit in which the pieces are written. In understanding Miguel Yuste's environment and influences, we can more accurately and authentically perform these great works.

The strong clarinet tradition in Spain is accompanied by a rich repertoire of music for clarinet that is largely unknown outside Spanish borders. The works for clarinet and piano by Miguel Yuste are a significant part of this repertoire's development. During his 30-year tenure at the Madrid Conservatory, Yuste's influence as a pedagogue, performer, and composer, became a pivotal point in Spain's clarinet history. While the precise number of works written for clarinet is unknown at this time, his seven published works alone have solidly placed Yuste among the "fathers of clarinet playing" in Spain.³⁹

While Yuste's works can be defined as "Neo-Romantic,"⁴⁰ the influence of his surroundings and his performing experience are undeniable in each of the seven published pieces for clarinet and piano. These works, in turn, have influenced two generations of clarinetists in Spain.

Miguel Yuste's pedagogical and compositional contributions continue to be an integral part of the Spanish clarinet tradition. His works are still regularly studied at the Madrid Conservatory, and clarinetists throughout Spain still perform his works. Due to his exceptional career, his compositional accomplishments, and his continuing influence on the Spanish clarinet traditions in Spain, Miguel Yuste and his music for clarinet and piano deserve further exposure to the worldwide music community.

1. Joan Enric Lluna, Compact Disc Liner Notes for *Fantasías Mediterráneas: Spanish Music for Clarinet and Piano*, Joan Enric Lluna (Clarinet Classics, CC 0017, 1997).
2. Beatrice Edgerly, *From the Hunter's Bow: The History and Romance of Musical Instruments*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's and Sons, 1942), 393.
3. Belen Perez Castillo, "Spain, I, 5: Art Music, 19th Century: Historico-Political Background," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001), vol. 24, 128.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Albert Rice, *The Clarinet in the Classical Period*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 58.
6. B. Kenyon de Pasqual, "Ventas de instrumentos musicales en Madrid durante la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII," *Revista de Musicología* 5 (1982): 311.
7. Carlos Jesús Casadó Tarín, e-mail message to author, 3 February, 2005.
8. *Ibid.*, 5 February, 2005.
9. *Ibid.* The current (as of 2005) members of the National Orchesra in madrid play on Buffet R-13, Vintage, Tosca, and RC clarinets. The bass clarinetist plays a Selmer 25-II Bass clarinet, and the E-flat clarinetist uses a Buffet RC. "However, one of them is trying a Selmer Saint Louis B-flat clarinet, and he is probably going to change [to] it."
10. Joan Enric Lluna, *Compac Disc Liner Notes for Capricho Pintoresco: Música Española para clarinete*, Joan Enric Lluna, (Harmonia Mundi, HMI 987022, 1999).
11. Julián Menéndez, "Teaching the Clarinet in Spain: Part I," translated by Enid Standring, *Woodwind* 5/8 (April 1953): 8.
12. Robert Stevenson and Jose Iges, "Madrid," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie, (New York: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001), vol. 15: 542.
13. See Appendix A for complete listing of professors at the Madrid Conservatory.
14. Menéndez, 8.
15. Julián Menéndez, "Teaching the Clarinet in Spain: Part II," translated by Enid Standring, *Woodwind* 5/9 (May 1953): 8.
16. Pamela Weston, *More Clarinet Virtuosi of the Past*, (Great Britain: Halstan and Co. Ltd., 1977), 278.
17. Julián Menéndez, "Teaching the Clarinet in Spain: Part II," 8.
18. Weston, 278.
19. *Ibid.*, 14.
20. Pamela Weston, *Yesterday's Clarinetists: A Sequel*, (Yorkshire, England: Emerson Editions, 2002), 187.
21. Enrique Perez Piquer, Compact Disc Liner Notes for *La Obra Para Clarinete y Piano de Miguel Yuste*, Enrique Perez Piquer, (Logomusic Records, LCD 1001, 1995).
22. Joan Enric Lluna, Compact Disc Liner Notes for *Fantasías Mediterráneas: Spanish Music for Clarinet and Piano*, Joan Enric Lluna, (Clarinet Classics, CC 0017, 1997).
23. José Tomás, e-mail message to author, 18 November, 2004.
24. Pedro Rubio, e-mail message to author, 16 November, 2004.
25. Piquer, *La Obra Para Clarinete y Piano de Miguel Yuste*.

26. Ibid.
27. Carlós Jesús Casadó Tarín, e-mail message to author, 21 February, 2005.
28. Louise K. Stein and Roger Alier, "Zarzuela," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie, (New York: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001) vol. 27, 755.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid, 142.
32. Belen Perez Castillo, "Spain, I, 5: Art Music, 19th Century: Song and Lyric Theater," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001), vol. 24, 130.
33. Martin Cunningham and Ramón Pelinski, "Spain, II, 2 (j): Traditional and Popular Music, General Features: Historical Background," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., 29 vols., ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 2001), vol. 24, 137.
34. Miguel Yuste, Notes, *Ingenuidad*, op. 8/59, *Leyenda, danza y lamento*, op. 72, *Estudio de Concierto*, op.148, (Madrid: Mundimúsica S.L., 1997).
35. Ibid.
36. Joan Eric Lluna, *Fantasías Mediterráneas: Spanish Music for Clarinet and Piano*.
37. Piquer, *La Obra...*
38. Piquer, *La Obra...*
39. Lluna, *Fantasías Mediterráneas...*
40. Lluna, *Fantasías Mediterráneas...*
Piquer, *La obra...*