



Module 7

7.1.1 LORCA'S UNIVERSALITY

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[Video Transcript 7.1.1]

Right now we are in the hall of the Residencia de Estudiantes, beside the piano at which Lorca delighted his contemporaries. García Lorca would soon become the most universal of Spain's writers, after Cervantes, an author who would be studied throughout the world, and who, even after his death, has not ceased to inspire artistic and literary works.

Since his time at the Residencia de Estudiantes, García Lorca was known for his work with musicians. And also for his poetry, of course, thanks to the success of 'Romancero Gitano'; and naturally, as a playwright, particularly in the 1930s, when, thanks to his time with La Barraca, he acquired vast experience in staging and theatrical techniques. Of all the Spanish poets of his era, García Lorca undoubtedly understood European symbolism better than anyone, and was the most astute in terms of understanding and following the poetic impulse embodied by the symbolists.

García Lorca understood the density involved in compressing poetry. His work can be likened to a piece of precious metalwork, in which each of the verses is a miniature of his entire poetic style. He draws on certain symbols, and in his poetry or his work for the theatre he makes use of innumerable expressive influences intended to construct a meaning that goes beyond narration.

In 'Paisaje con dos Tumbas y un Perro Asirio' (from 'Poeta en Nueva York') García Lorca writes: "For a long time I loved a boy / who had a feather on his tongue / and we lived for a hundred years inside a knife." That expressive density that delights in the diminutive is something that Lorca maintains throughout his poetry and his theatre, and that has continued to inspire the most important literary and artistic works of the last fifty years.

In the world of music, Leonard Cohen's 'Take This Waltz' (adapted from 'Pequeño Vals Vienés' de García Lorca) became one of his greatest hits; yet the Granadan would probably not even have recognized his own poem, due to the infinite distance separating it from 'Poeta en Nueva York' and the work of Leonard Cohen.

Similarly, composer Maurice Ohana wrote an opera, 'Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías', with a performance by Maurice Molho. In these works we can appreciate the universality of García Lorca's work and how it lends itself to very diverse styles and meanings.