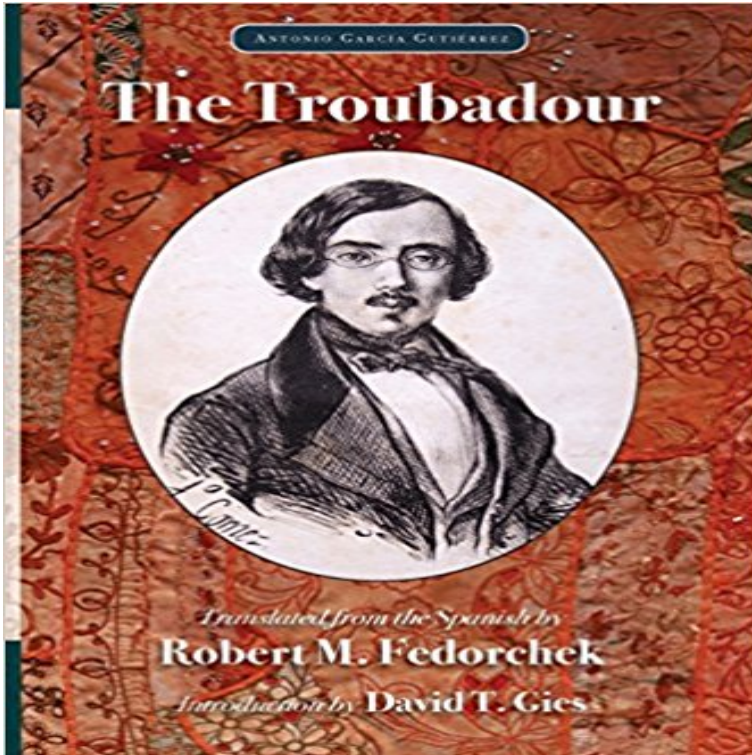


The Troubadour (1836): A Chivalresque Drama in Five Acts in Prose and Verse



On March 1, 1836, a young Spanish soldier—he was four months shy of his twenty-third birthday—left his Leganes army barracks without permission to attend the premiere of his first play at Madrid's Teatro del Principe. The Troubadour (El Trovador), the object of much advance publicity, proved to be a resounding success, so much so that the unknown playwright was raucously summoned to the stage to take a bow. Unprepared for such a reception and not dressed for the occasion, Antonio Garcia Gutierrez (1813-84) accepted a coat from Ventura de la Vega, a fellow playwright, in order to look more presentable to his admiring public. If the Duke of Rivass Don Alvaro o la fuerza del sino (which premiered on March 22, 1835, in the very same Teatro del Principe) was the opening breach, El Trovador was the definitive salvo that sealed the triumph of the Spanish Romantic theater. It contains all the impassioned, unrestrained elements—including, like Don Alvaro, a mixture of prose and verse—that heighten the twin themes of the unbridled passion of love and the driven pursuit of vengeance. Manrique, the troubadour and poet-musician of the title, cannot bring his love for the beautiful Leonor to fruition: he is of a lower social standing than she, and her brother has promised her to another, the formidable Count of Luna, who will become Manrique's sworn enemy. The rivalry of the two men to win her hand creates the dramatic tension that moves the plot at a rapid pace. And if Leonor is an exemplary Romantic heroine, the old Gypsy woman Azucena is a colorful and powerful force who brings drama to the storyline as a result of her mysterious connection to the Count. The two women will determine Manrique's fate: Leonor with her love and Azucena with her need for vengeance, factors utilized so well by Giuseppe Verdi and his librettist Salvatore Cammarano for the composition of Il

Trovatore (1853), the opera that Verdi based on El Trovador of Antonio Garcia Gutierrez. Serie de Traducciones criticas 4 isbn 978-1-58871- pb

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