

Federico García Lorca: 1898–1936

- 1898 Born on 5 June in the village of Fuente Vaqueros in the province of Granada, the eldest of the four children of Don Federico García Rodríguez, a wealthy farmer and landowner, and Doña Vicenta Lorca Romero, a former schoolteacher in the village.
- 1907 The family moves to the village of Asquerosa, later called Valderrubio, only three miles from Fuente Vaqueros, where Don Federico buys a large house.
- 1908 Attends a boarding school in the town of Almería, some –09 seventy miles from Granada, but his stay there is cut short by illness.
- 1909 Don Federico moves the family to Granada, the city which was to play such an important part in Lorca's work. He attends a small private school, the College of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which, despite its name, is free of clerical influence. He is much more interested in music, in particular in playing the piano, than in his academic studies.
- 1914 After failing the second part of his final secondary education
–15 examinations in 1914, he retakes it successfully in the following year and, at the instigation of his parents, enters the Faculties of Philosophy and Letters and of Law at the University of Granada. His university career proves to be less than remarkable, but he comes under the influence of two distinguished professors: Martín Domínguez Berrueta, Professor of the Theory of Literature and the Arts, and Fernando de los Ríos Urruti, Professor of Political and Comparative Law. His musical abilities continue to develop under the teaching of Don Antonio Segura. He joins the Arts Club in Granada and also begins to frequent the Café Alameda, a meeting-place for the intellectuals and artists of the town, as well as for foreign visitors such as H. G. Wells,

- Rudyard Kipling and Artur Rubinstein.
- 1916 Study trips in May and October, organised by Domínguez Berrueta, to various Spanish towns and cities.
- 1917 In the spring and summer two further study trips. Lorca begins to write poetry, prose and short plays. Much of the poetry is concerned with sexual love and reveals the conflict in his mind between sexual desire and Catholic sexual morality.
- 1918 With the financial assistance of his father, Lorca publishes *Impressions and Landscapes*, a book based on his earlier travels with Domínguez Berrueta.
- 1919 In Granada meets Gregorio Martínez Sierra, a Madrid theatre producer, who encourages him to write a play about an injured butterfly (*The Butterfly's Evil Spell*), and the great Spanish composer, Manuel de Falla, with whom he begins an influential friendship. Moves from Granada to Madrid, commencing a ten-year stay at the Residencia de Estudiantes, an educational institution based on the Oxbridge college system. Meets Luis Buñuel, the future film director, who had entered the Residencia in 1917.
- 1920 *The Butterfly's Evil Spell* premieres at the Teatro Eslava in Madrid on 22 March but closes after four performances. Audience hostility towards a play about cockroaches, a butterfly and a scorpion is accompanied by poor reviews.
- 1921 Publication in Madrid of Lorca's first volume of poetry, *Book of Poems*.
- 1922 Completes a play for puppets, *The Tragicomedy of Don Cristóbal and Señorita Rosita*. In February Lorca lectures on 'deep song' (flamenco song) at the Arts Club in Granada, and, with Manuel de Falla and Miguel Cerón, helps to organise the Festival of Deep Song, held on 13 and 14 June in the Alhambra's Plaza de los Aljibes. In anticipation of these events, he had written in the previous year a series of poems inspired by 'deep song' which he hoped to publish in conjunction with the festival.
- 1923 Organises with Manuel de Falla a puppet show which includes Lorca's own puppet play, *The Girl who Waters the Basil Plant*, and which takes place on 6 January in the García Lorcas' large flat in Granada. In the same month Lorca completes his law degree. In the Residencia he embarks on

- his important friendship with Salvador Dalí.
- 1924 Works on a collection of poems, *Gypsy Ballads*, on his second full-length play, *Mariana Pineda*, and on another play strongly influenced by the puppet tradition, *The Shoemaker's Wonderful Wife*. At the Residencia he becomes friendly with Rafael Alberti, who would soon become one of Spain's leading poets.
- 1925 Stays with Salvador Dalí and his sister, Ana María, at the family homes in Cadaqués and Figueras. Reads *Mariana Pineda* to them. Visits and is much impressed by Barcelona. Back in Granada writes several short plays, of which *Buster Keaton's Spin* and *The Maiden, the Sailor and the Student* survive.
- 1926 Completes *The Love of Don Perlimplín for Belisa in his Garden*. In Granada he delivers an important lecture, 'The Poetic Image in Don Luis de Góngora', on the great seventeenth-century Spanish poet. Publishes *Ode to Salvador Dalí*.
- 1927 Premiere of *Mariana Pineda*, to great acclaim, on 24 June at the Teatro Goya in Barcelona. Lorca exhibits twenty-four of his drawings at the Galerías Dalmau in the same city. Publishes *Songs*, his second volume of poems. *Mariana Pineda* opens at the Teatro Fontalba in Madrid on 12 October and is enthusiastically received.
- 1928 Edits the first issue of the literary magazine, *Cockerel*. He becomes involved with a young sculptor, Emilio Aladrén, to whom he is passionately attracted. At the end of July *Gypsy Ballads* is published to great critical acclaim, but is criticised by Dalí and Buñuel for being too traditional and not sufficiently avant-garde. During the summer Lorca feels depressed. In the autumn he delivers two lectures to the Athenaeum Club in Granada, 'Imagination, Inspiration and Escape in Poetry', and 'Sketch of the New Painting'.
- 1929 The Madrid premiere of *The Love of Don Perlimplín for Belisa in his Garden* is banned by the authorities. On 29 April *Mariana Pineda* opens triumphantly at the Teatro Cervantes in Granada. Emilio Aladrén begins to be involved romantically with the English girl he would marry two years later. This, together with anxieties about his deteriorating relationship with Dalí and about his work and his growing fame, exacerbates Lorca's depression. His family decide to send him to New York in the company of Fernando de los Ríos,

- where, after visiting Paris, London, Lucton School near Ludlow, Oxford, and Southampton, he arrives on 19 June. Enrols as a student of English at Columbia University, visits Harlem, then spends the summer in Vermont before returning to New York. Witnesses the Wall Street Crash. Works on *Poet in New York* and writes *Trip to the Moon*, a screenplay for the silent cinema, inspired in part by a visit to Coney Island but expressing too his own sexual anxieties.
- 1930 Leaves New York for Cuba, arriving in Havana on 7 March. Works on *The Public* and on *Ode to Walt Whitman*. Returns to Spain at the end of June. *The Shoemaker's Wonderful Wife* premiered in Madrid at the Teatro Español on 24 December.
- 1931 Publication of *Poem of Deep Song*. Completes *When Five Years Pass*. Appointed by the new left-wing Republican government as the artistic director of the Teatro Universitario, a touring theatre group which came to be known as 'La Barraca'. For the next four years the company would perform the great Spanish plays of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the towns and villages of rural Spain as part of the government's broad-based educational programme.
- 1932 Lorca works on *Blood Wedding*. Reads *Poet in New York* in Barcelona.
- 1933 Premiere of *Blood Wedding* on 8 March at the Teatro Beatriz in Madrid, acclaimed by all the critics. *The Love of Don Perlimplin for Belisa in his Garden* premiered at the Teatro Español in Madrid on 5 April. Lorca works on *Yerma* and in October travels to Argentina where he both lectured and attended productions of his own plays: *Blood Wedding* and *The Shoemaker's Wonderful Wife*, both triumphantly received in Buenos Aires.
- 1934 *Mariana Pineda* opens in Buenos Aires on 12 January but receives only lukewarm reviews. Lorca's adaptation of Lope de Vega's *The Foolish Lady* is specially performed for an audience of actors. He arrives in Spain once again on 11 April and recommences work with 'La Barraca'. The bullfighter Ignacio Sánchez Mejías, a close friend of Lorca, receives fatal wounds in the bullring in Manzanares on 11 August. Shortly afterwards Lorca begins writing *Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías* and also works on *Doña Rosita the*

Spinster. On 29 December *Yerma* opens at the Teatro Español in Madrid. Despite an attempt by the Right to disrupt the performance, the play is received with great enthusiasm by both audience and critics.

- 1935 *The Shoemaker's Wonderful Wife* opens at the Madrid Coliseum on 18 March. Publication of *Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías*. *The Puppet Show of Don Cristóbal* performed in the Paseo de Recoletos during the Madrid Book Fair. Lorca's version of *The Foolish Lady* is performed in both Madrid and Barcelona. *Yerma* opens in Barcelona on 17 September. Lorca works on *Sonnets of Dark Love* and on *Play Without a Title*. *Blood Wedding* opens in Barcelona on 22 November at the Principal Palace Theatre, to be followed by the triumphant premiere, on 12 December, of *Doña Rosita the Spinster*.
- 1936 Increasing political trouble in Spain. The Right and Centre parties defeated by the left-wing Popular Front in the February General Election. In the following months Lorca's socialist sympathies are increasingly in evidence. Publishes *Six Galician Poems* and *First Songs*. Works on *The Dreams of My Cousin Aurelia*, *Blood Has No Voice* (now lost), and *Play Without a Title*. Rehearsals of *When Five Years Pass* for a production at the Anfistora Club. *The House of Bernarda Alba* is completed on 19 June and in the following week reads the play to groups of his friends. Political unrest continues and Lorca leaves Madrid for Granada on 13 July. Five days later Franco initiates a military uprising against the Madrid government. The military in Granada rise on 20 July. Lorca, fearing the worst, takes refuge in the house of a fellow poet and friend, Luis Rosales. He is taken away from there on 16 August and detained in the Civil Government building. In the early hours of 18 August he is driven by Francoist thugs to a building outside the village of Viznar, north-east of Granada. From there he is taken by lorry, together with three other men, and shot in the olive-groves which cover the slopes above the road to the village of Alfacar. In 1940 the authorities in Granada attempted to conceal the assassination by declaring that Lorca had died 'in the month of August 1936 from war wounds'.