

Sancho Engano

- b. Barcelona 1932
- d. Milan 1995

Born into a family in the bullfighting business, Sancho Engano's father (Pablo Engano) was employed as 'Toro Técnico Vigilancia' (Bull Maintenance Technician); working, very much, behind the scenes and, so far as it is possible for the sake of safety, behind the bull also. The ideal qualities associated with this vocation, or, indeed, most aspects of large ruminant animal husbandry are a worse-than-average sense of smell, and the ability to sprint very fast over short distances. It was from the age of fifteen that he worked alongside his father behind the bullring. Indeed, Sancho Engano inherited another of his father's talents and became, in his twenties, the top two-hundred meter sprinter for three consecutive years in the village near Barcelona where he was raised. Other passions he shared with his father were rose cultivation (a spin-off from the bullring), and, most importantly, music - specifically the viola. Pablo Engano was an enthusiastic amateur violist, and passed his love of the viola onto his eldest son Sancho who, in time, became even more of an amateur than his father. Sancho played sub-principal viola beside his father in the local orchestra every Friday night, never missing a concert in the seventeen years of his membership. He left the orchestra in a blaze of glory with his solo from Richard Strauss's 'Don Quixote', described in the local newspaper review as 'Formidable'. He was also a very keen concert goer, and was able, through sheer perseverance and devotion, and through generous handouts of bull manure to the keen horticulturists in the orchestra's administration, to sit-in on some of the rehearsals of the great orchestras that would visit nearby Barcelona. He would eagerly jot down the words of the great maestri that he had the privilege of watching. One of his treasured possessions was his little notebook in which was hurriedly written such profound and enlightening snippets as:

'We live in an unchanging age of unchanging changeless change'.

'No, I have never had an electric shock, why do you ask?'

'Everyone's differences are all something those of us who are different always have in common with everyone, always'.

'I rarely equivocate, except when discussing the exact science of my conducting'.

'Has anyone seen my baton, it was in my hand a moment ago'.

'There are only two kinds of composer – those who are dead, and those who ought to be dead'.

'As always, it was always never not a pleasure not to have the pleasure of not conducting this orchestra'.

'Honest, it wasn't me'.

'I never fail to beat my orchestra to the end of the performance'.

'There seem to be two orchestras on the concert platform today'.

'I give in, which end am I supposed to hold?'

He took to composition in his forties after having been caught unawares by a particularly frisky bull and, as a result, being unable to sit down for two weeks, he thus turned his attention during his convalescence, to the viola quartet and its repertoire, a passion that was to last the rest of his life. It was shortly after this that he took early retirement from the bullfighting industry, became a vegetarian, and devoted all his energy and enthusiasm to music.

His output is confined solely to this unusual ensemble, yet there is no record of any of his works being performed during his time.

However, these days Engano is hailed as the finest writer of viola quartets to emerge from his village near Barcelona, and it is fair to say that the viola quartet would not be what it is today without his significant contribution.