

## Villancico a la Santísima Virgen

This piece was composed by Hilarión Eslava while in Sevilla in 1834 (see <http://hilarioneslava.org/>), and was initially performed as a soprano choir + small orchestra piece, as accompaniment to a “Baile de los Seises” (for more about these, see [https://musescore.com/rebecca\\_rufin/scores/5571515](https://musescore.com/rebecca_rufin/scores/5571515)). It became quite popular in its day, and the lyrics were adapted to suit various occasions. Eslava apparently gifted the music to his second hometown, Pamplona, late in his life, where the words were adapted to honor the local Virgen del Camino, replacing the original dedication to the Virgen del Carmen. I include here Eslava’s original lyrics, as well as the modified lyrics used in Pamplona. The performance that I have synched to the score, sung by the Coral de Cámara de Pamplona, has a somewhat different Pamplonese text as well.

Although in latter years this piece was described as a “Sevillana” or more specifically, a “Sevillana a la Virgen del Camino”, that was more of a reference to the fact that Eslava wrote it while in Sevilla and perhaps its lively style, but in reality the music has little in common with the popular dance form of Sevilla (re.: see Hernández Ascunce in “El antiguo repertorio de la Virgen del Camino” [1948]). That said, it is definitely dance-like (and is still sometimes danced to, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dv1Jd4XVIV0&feature=youtu.be>), but it is really closer to a Navarrese “jota” dance in its style.

Here is an English translation of Eslava’s original “Sevilla” lyrics:

### INTRODUCTION

Hail, oh Virgin, from the clear sea  
that you produce serenely this day!  
Today your children, mother (oh Mother!)  
proclaim cordial affection to you.

### CHORUS

For the purity of the excellent Virgin  
Pleasant singings,  
and from Spain immortal blazon,  
acclaiming the fertile Queen eternal.

### VERSE 1

Pure pink roses, graceful and bright  
from the colorful soil of Spain,

you cast today for the pleasure  
and blissful celestial perfumes.  
From the sea amid unpredictable waves,  
you direct our way to the port,  
what a safe and beautiful beacon.

VERSE 2

Hail Mary of full grace,  
worthy Mother of the human Word,  
for the beauty that God has given us  
as a sacred pledge of love.  
Today your solicitous children arrive  
to your throne of glory, Mary,  
to offer you perpetual love,  
to sing your name in praise.