

Editor's Notes for Villancico Bayle al Santísimo Sacramento

The *Baile* (or *Bayle*) *de los Seises* is a form of children's solemn liturgical song and dance that has been traditional in Spain—especially in Sevilla, for many centuries, dating back to the 1500's and probably earlier, and is still performed today. In Sevilla, this tradition takes place at the Cathedral a number of times during the year, the most important occasions being the Feast of Corpus Christi and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Here are a couple of sources you can consult to learn more about this tradition:

<https://newspapers.bc.edu/?a=d&d=BOSTONSH19020222-01.2.57> (in English, from 1902)

<http://www.realacademiabellasartessevillla.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/06-Los-Ni%C3%B1os-Seises.-Jos%C3%A9-Enrique-Ayarra.pdf> (in Spanish; the author, José Enrique Ayarra Jarne, also happens to be a biographer of Eslava during the composer's time in Sevilla)

One of Hilarión Eslava's duties as *Maestro de Capilla* (Master of the Chapel) at the Cathedral of Sevilla was to look after and direct the musical education of the *seises*. He composed several *villancicos* for them, one of which I have previously transcribed, available at

https://musescore.com/rebecca_rufin/baile-de-los-seises-dance-of-the-seises and at

[https://hilarioneslava.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Baile de los Seises Dance of the Seises.pdf](https://hilarioneslava.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Baile%20de%20los%20Seises%20Dance%20of%20the%20Seises.pdf).

This composition is particularly charming, with its elegant orchestral accompaniment and a 3:4 time *estribillo* section that is reminiscent of the traditional *sevillana* dance. It is scored for children's voices (as is traditional), in places complemented by castanets played by the *seises* themselves. This piece was written specifically for the Feast of Corpus Christi (the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament, which is celebrated the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, in May or June), with the ten—not six, as the name in Spanish might imply, boy dancers dressed as 17th century court pages, wearing red and white costumes and broad, plumed hats.

I found a reference to this exact composition in an 1868 English literary journal called "*Notes and Queries: a medium of intercommunication for literary men, general readers, etc.*". On page 77 of this journal, contributor William Scott mentions that he observed this work performed in Sevilla by *seises* dressed in blue and white (tradition should have had them dressed in red and white, as Mr. Scott noted), and he was able to obtain the full orchestral score to this piece "at some cost and much trouble" from the *Maestro de Capilla*. He provides the language on the cover of the score as well as the lyrics in his article, which match my source material (except for a few typographical errors), so we are sure it is the same piece. Although Eslava was himself the *Maestro de Capilla* in the Cathedral of Sevilla from 1832-1844, he moved on to Madrid in 1844. Mr. Scott states that his music procurement occurred in about 1850, so it was most likely through Eslava's successor in that position.

SPANISH LYRICS AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Se glorien los mundanos
en sus caballos y trenes
y se den mil parabienes
en sus festines insanos
mientras los fieles Cristianos,
detestando la impiedad,
al Dios de la Majestad
en alto templo veneran,
y el milagro consideran
mayor de su caridad.

ESTRIBILLO

Tu nombre Divino,
Jesús, invocamos,
y Dios, te adoramos,
por nos encarnado,
y en hostia abreviado
de célico pan.

COPLAS:

1. O, inefable dulzura,
y sagrado alimento,
que formas el contento
de quien sabe de amor,
¡mal haya la locura
y grande atrevimiento
del mundo, que el portento
desprecia del Señor!

2. Banquete de escogidos,
del hombre desdeñado,
¡quien me diera que honrado
te logre yo mirar!
Y que reconocidos
todos al extremado
favor, con tal bocado
se quieran regalar.

The worldly may rejoice
in their horses and their comforts
and may congratulate themselves a thousand times
in their foolish feasts,
while the Christian faithful,
hating impiety,
to God of Majesty
in his high temple venerate,
and the miracle they consider
the greatest of His charity.

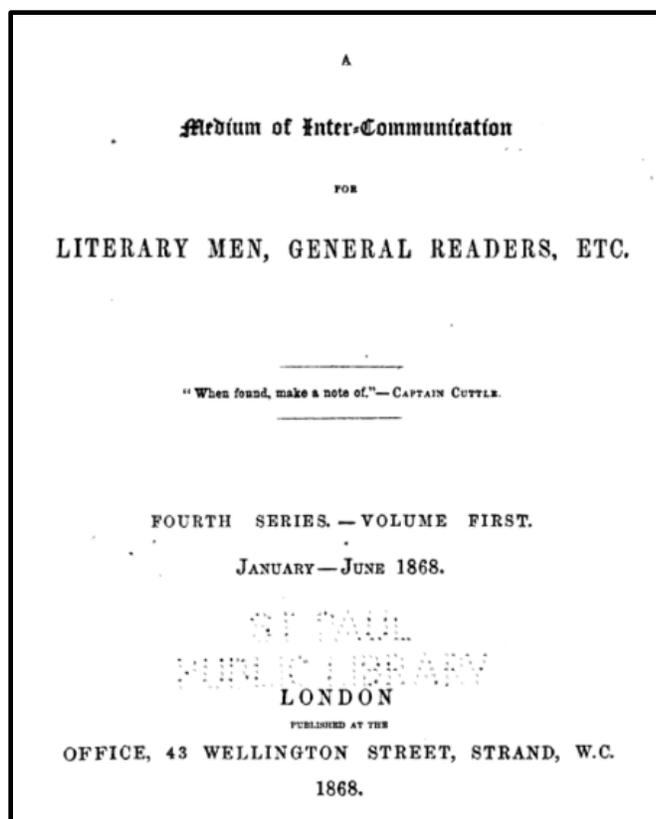
CHORUS

Your Divine name,
Jesus, we invoke,
and God, we adore you,
for us made flesh
and in a host simply present
of celestial bread made.

COPLAS:

1. O, ineffable sweetness,
and holy nourishment,
which delights
those who know of love,
cursed be the madness
and the great audacity
of a world, which the portent
of the Lord despises!

2. Banquet of the chosen,
by man scorned,
if only I could have the honor
to be able to see you!
And that recognizing
all of us the extravagant
gift, such a morsel
will want to receive.



Title Page from 1868 journal

DANCING BEFORE THE ALTAR IN SEVILLE
CATHEDRAL.

(3rd S. xi. 132, &c.)

Several of your contributors and correspondents have called attention to the famous dance executed by the choristers at the Cathedral of Seville on Corpus Christi Day, and on other Festivals. Some years ago—it was in 1850—I was present at this unique ceremony. At some cost and much trouble I procured from the Maestro de Capilla the full orchestral score of the music, together with the words of the "Hymn to the Sacrament" sung, during the execution of the minuet, by the choristers dressed in ancient court costume of blue and white with plumed hats. Mr. Ford states, that the dress on the Festival of the Conception is blue and white, but on the Corpus red and white; and this for symbolical reasons. I have no doubt that this is the rule, but when I was present it was not observed. I send the hymn, which has not, as I believe, been published.

WILLIAM SCOTT.

56, Albany Street, Regent's Park, N.W.

Excerpt from Page 77 of journal

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NOTES A

" Villancico y Bayle
Al santísimo Sacramento
a tres Voces y Orquesta,
Por Don Ylarión Esclaba y Elisouido,
Maestro de Capilla,
de la Santa Iglesia Catedral de Sevilla.

" Se glorien los mundanos
En sus caballos y trenes,
Y se den mil paralienes
En sus festines insanos!
Mientras los fieles Cristianos,
Detestando la impiedad,
Al Dios de la Majestad,
En alto templo veneran,
Y el milagro consideran
Mayor de su caridad.
Tu nombre Divino,
Jesus, invocamos,
Y Dios Te adoramos
Por nos encarnado,
Y en hostia abreviado
De celico pan!
Tu nombre, &c.
[Da capo.]

" O inefabile dulzura,
Y sagrado elemento,
Que formas el contento
De quien sabe de amor!
Mal haya la locura
Y grande atrevimiento
Del mundo, quel portento
Despreciado del Señor!

Copla 2.

" Banquete de escogidos
Del hombre desdeñado,
Quien me diera que honrado
Te logre yo mirar!
Y que reconocidos
Todos al estremado
Favor, con tal locado
Se quieren regalar."

Excerpt from Page 78 of journal