

Editor's Notes for *Donostiako hiru damatxo (Three little damsels from Donostia)*¹

Not all of Hilarión Eslava's work was religious in nature, and he would occasionally indulge in small projects to preserve traditional folk music that, clearly, he loved². This piece, transcribed from an undated, unsigned handwritten manuscript attributed to him, would be a good example of that.

"Donostiako hiru damatxo" (*Three little damsels from Donostia*³) is a popular Basque folksong⁴. The origin of the tune is uncertain, but it was already circulating in the 18th century⁵. The author of the lyrics has been hypothesized to have been José Ignacio de Larramendi (1786-1855)⁶. The original lyrics are in *erdialdeko euskalkia*, Basque Central (or Gipuzkoan) dialect, but other versions –including also different regional verses, exist⁷. The original score used here only contained the first, best known *bertso* or stanza. The other stanzas I have added have been compiled from a variety of online sources.

The attribution of this unsigned score to Eslava is based only on circumstantial evidence. Although we cannot be entirely certain that this was Eslava's arrangement, the manuscript has been catalogued by Eresbil (the manuscript source) as a possible Eslava composition⁸. From what I can tell, the handwriting and certain stylistic elements are indeed similar to Eslava's. The simplicity of the score indicates that this might have been written primarily as a diversion or as a student exercise.

¹ For the preparation of these notes, we have relied in part on information provided by Eresbil, the Basque Music Archive (<https://www.eresbil.eus/>). We are especially indebted to Mr. Mark Barnés for his valuable help.

² Further evidence of this are the wonderful arrangements Eslava wrote of Andalusian songs, namely *¡Ay, salero!* and *El pescador*, both of which I have already had the pleasure of transcribing.

³ *Donostia* is the Basque name of the capital of the province of Gipuzkoa, better known by its Spanish name, San Sebastián.

⁴ In his *Cancionero Popular Vasco* (ed. Erein [2007], p. 28, in Spanish), the well-known Basque musician José Ignacio Ansorena points out that this song was at one point one of the best-known folk tunes in the entire Euskal Herria (Basque homeland). Today, a number of versions of the song can be found online in the form of modern scores (by other than Eslava), including for piano and *a cappella* choir, and in performance, on *YouTube*.

⁵ In his book (see preceding footnote), Ansorena quotes another Basque musicologist, Francisco Gascue, who suggests a possible musical link of this tune with folk songs from the British Isles and specifically the popular nursery rhyme "There Was a Jolly Miller Once" (also known as "The Miller of the Dee").

⁶ A Basque priest from Azkoitia, Gipuzkoa. See Kaltzakorta, J. in "Donostiako hiru damatxo" kantaren gainean", *Euskalingua 2002*, Vol. 1, pp. 80-85. Online at <http://mendebalde.eus/euskalinguak/Euskalingua%201/Donostiako%20hiru%20damatxo%20kantaren%20gainean.pdf> (In Euskera)

⁷ *Ibid.* In this version of the song, Ansorena believes that the first four *bertsoak* (stanzas) might have been written at the same time, and the rest were gradually added later.

⁸ The handwritten, unsigned manuscript was found by Spanish organist and musicologist Joaquín Pildain among a number of Eslava solfège and piano materials that had been in the possession of Eslava student and biographer José María Esperanza y Sola. The notation style and calligraphy do seem to resemble Eslava's.

My editorial changes for this transcription include:

1. Addition of a separate vocal staff (the original manuscript only had the piano staves);
2. There appear to be numerous spelling errors in the original score lyrics – these were corrected to match the lyrics available in modern Euskera (Basque language);
3. Addition of *bertsoak* (stanzas) 2-8 (only the first stanza was included in the source manuscript);
4. Addition of minimal dynamics (besides a *fermata* and single *p* notation in the piano secondo part, there were none provided) – these are merely suggestions and should be freely interpreted;
5. Notational clarification with regard to the repeats.

A set of Basque lyrics and an *approximate* English translation⁹ are provided below:

<p>Donostiako hiru damatxo Erreterian dendari. (repeat) Josten ere badakite, baina ardoa edaten hobeki. Eta kriskitin, kraskitin, arrosa krabelin, ardoa edaten hobeki.</p>	<p><i>Three little damsels from Donostia seamstresses in Erreteria.¹⁰ (repeat) They know how to sew, but drink wine even better. With the kriskitin, kraskitin, rose and carnation, drink wine even better.</i></p>
<p>Donostiako Gaztelupeko sagardoaren gozoa, (repeat) hantxen edaten ari nintzala hautsi zitzaidan basoa. Eta kriskitin, kraskitin, arrosa krabelin, basoa kristalezkoa.</p>	<p><i>Gaztelupe in Donostia, sweet cider (repeat) I was drinking there and I broke my cup. With the kriskitin, kraskitin, rose and carnation, a cup made of glass.</i></p>
<p>Donostiako hiru damatxo hirurak gona gorriak, (repeat) sartutzen dira tabernara ta irtetzen dira hordiak. Eta kriskitin, kraskitin, arrosa krabelin irtetzen dira hordiak.</p>	<p><i>Three little damsels from Donostia all three in red skirts, (repeat) they enter the tavern and they leave drunk. With the kriskitin, kraskitin, rose and carnation, they leave drunk.</i></p>

⁹ The Basque words have been copied from José Ignacio Ansorena's book (see FN 4). The translation is drawn in part from the Spanish language translation included with that reference and from other sources online.

¹⁰ Erreteria is a Gipuzkoan town near Donostia. Known in Spanish as Rentería.

<p>Donostiako hiru damatxo egin omen dute apustu, (repeat) zeinek ardo gehiago edanda, zein gutxiago mozkortu. Eta kriskitin, kraskitin, arrosa krabelin, zein gutxiago mozkortu.</p>	<p><i>Three little damsels from Donostia have just made a bet, (repeat) who drinks more wine, who is less drunk. With the kriskitin, kraskitin, rose and carnation, who is less drunk.</i></p>
<p>Donostiako hiru damatxo Errenteriko kalean (repeat) egunez oso triste ibili baina dantzatu gauean eta kriskitin, kraskitin, arrosa krabelin baina dantzatu gauean.</p>	<p><i>Three little damsels from Donostia on a street in Errenteria, (repeat) walk very sad during the day but dance the night away with the kriskitin, kraskitin, rose and carnation, but dance the night away.</i></p>
<p>Donostiako neskatxatxoak kalera nahi dutenean: (repeat) –Ama piperrik ez dago eta banoa salto batean. Eta kriskitin, kraskitin, arrosa krabelin, banoa salto batean.</p>	<p><i>When the girls from Donostia want to go out they say: (repeat) –Mother, there's no pepper I will leap out to get it. With the kriskitin, kraskitin, rose and carnation, I will leap out to get it.</i></p>
<p>Donostiako neskatxatxoak mandatuen aitzakian (repeat) mutilarekin egoten dira kalean jolaskerian eta kriskitin, kraskitin, arrosa krabelin, pozez algara haundian.</p>	<p><i>The girls from Donostia under the pretext of errands (repeat) stay with a boy on the street toying with the kriskitin, kraskitin, rose and carnation, with great joyous laughter.</i></p>
<p>Arrosatxoak bost hosto ditu, krabelintxoak hamabi, (repeat) Mari Joxepa nahi duen horrek eska bezaio amari. Eta kriskitin, kraskitin, arrosa krabelin, eska bezaio amari.</p>	<p><i>The rose has five petals, carnations have twelve, (repeat) whoever loves Mari Joxepa can go ask her mother. With the kriskitin, kraskitin, rose and carnation, can go ask her mother.</i></p>