

## Editor's notes for "*Hoy el Amor Divino*" – *Villancico y Baile de Seises*

Here is another of Hilarión Eslava's *Villancicos* intended as a *Baile de Seises* from the archives of the Cathedral of Sevilla, obtained via the Institución Colombina. *Villancicos* are a traditional form of Spanish song, frequently (though not necessarily) on a religious theme and, in olden times, not exclusively associated with Christmas, as they are today. *Villancicos* typically consist of an introduction, a refrain ("*estribillo*") and "*coplas*" or verses, each part with its own prescribed meter. The "*Baile de Seises*" is a form of children's liturgical dance that has been traditional in some parts of Spain, most prominently in Sevilla, for many centuries and is still performed today on a few specific celebrations of the Roman Catholic liturgy. In the Cathedral of Sevilla (the object of this particular piece), the *Seises* (singular "*Seise*") are a group of ten pre-adolescent boys who are dressed in traditional baroque-era costumes, striped in blue or red depending on the occasion, their heads covered by plumed hats of matching colors. Their name comes from the Spanish for "six" ("*seis*"), as they were originally six boys who were trained as leading choirboys, educated and boarded at the church's expense.

During his time as Master of the Chapel at the Cathedral of Sevilla (1832-1844), one of Hilarión Eslava's responsibilities was to look after the education and well-being of the *Seises*. He also wrote nearly a dozen *villancicos* for the *Baile de Seises*, a task that he once referred to as "one of his greatest pleasures" as a composer. I believe he enjoyed this form of music because it gave him opportunity to freely draw on traditional Spanish folk music.

I have previously transcribed and described several other *Villancicos y Bailes de Seises* by Eslava, so for additional historical context, rather than repeat myself here, I direct you to <https://hilarioneslava.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Ed-Notes-candor-de-luz-eterna-orchestrated.pdf> In these notes I will focus on the specific music.

The lyrics for this piece are derived from two different Eucharistic poems written around 1820 by Fr. Pedro Manuel Prieto (?-1820), Canónigo Magistral (chief preacher appointed by the *cabildo* or chapter) of the Cathedral of Sevilla. The melody and accompanying orchestration are flowing and lively, obviously reminiscent of Spanish dance music of the time.

The original manuscript for this piece came to us in the form of a general score (which appears to be in Eslava's own handwriting), and a collection of *particellas* of less certain hand and date. The original composition dates to 1836, in the first few years of Eslava's appointment as Master of the Chapel of the Cathedral of Sevilla. Thematically, this is a Eucharistic *villancico* ("*al Santísimo*"), therefore intended for occasions honoring the Blessed Sacrament. From penciled-in notes found on some of the *particellas*, it appears that this was an especially popular piece for Shrovetide (the three days preceding the start of the Lenten season) and for the feast of Corpus Christi, being performed almost every year on those dates from 1876 (and likely earlier) through at least 1910. This was also the *villancico* selected for a special performance at Sevilla's Palacio Arzobispal on March 6, 1896, on the occasion of the visit of the Papal nuncio (envoy) to Spain, Cardinal Serafino Cretoni (1834-1909). Performances of the *bailes de Seises* outside of the usual venues around the Cathedral and traditional feasts were (and are) extremely rare.

Following are a few more detailed observations about the score:

1. The general score included all the parts except for the violoncello. For this, there was an individual *particella*, which was nearly identical to the contrabass part.

2. There were sparse as well as conflicting dynamic and articulation instructions between the *particella* set and the full score, and also between individual parts. I did my best to discern Eslava's true intent, but it would be wise to consult the original version if in doubt.
3. Castanets were clearly indicated in the score, but no rhythmic pattern was provided. I have therefore added a suggested rhythm that sounded well to my ears, but of course can be replaced.

For more about Eslava and his music, visit <https://hilarioneslava.org/home/home-en/>.

As a final note, the audio rendering of this piece on the hilarioneslava.org music page (<https://hilarioneslava.org/music/>) is the first one edited to feature MuseScore 4's impressive soundfonts. You can also check it out by accessing the audio file itself, at <https://hilarioneslava.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Hoy-el-Amor-Divino-MS4.mp3>.

SPANISH LYRICS	APPROXIMATE ENGLISH TRANSLATION
<p>INTRODUCCIÓN</p> <p>Hoy el Amor Divino hace de amor alarde, y extático discurre por plazas y por calles, tragando ingratitudes. En busca de los hombres va ese Dios anhelante, porque arda el mundo todo en el fuego que trae.</p>	<p>INTRODUCTION</p> <p>Today, the Divine Love flaunts its love, and wanders ecstatic through squares and streets, swallowing up ingratitude. In search of men goes this longing God, so that the whole world may burn in the fire it ushers.</p>
<p>ESTRIBILLO</p> <p>¡Ay, Jesús mío! Tu amor me inflame, pues has salido para inflamarme. Ven, ven, ven, amor mío, ven, ven, ven, y no tardes, ven, ven, ven, como sueles, a consolarme.</p>	<p>REFRAIN</p> <p>Oh, my Jesus! Let your love consume me, for you have come forth to set me aflame. Come, come, come, my love, come, come, come, and do not tarry, come, come, come, as you often do, to comfort me.</p>
<p>COPLAS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hoy centelleando incendios de amor hacia todas partes, dentro de una blanca nube el Sol de Justicia sale.</li> <li>2. Tanto ha subido de punto, tanto ha salido de margen tu amor, que más no le queda que hacer, ni puede, ni sabe.</li> </ol>	<p>VERSES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Today, with fires of love flashing everywhere, from within a white cloud the Sun of Righteousness rises.</li> <li>2. Having grown to such an extent, Having so vastly overrun its banks your love, there is nothing left for it to do, nor is it able to, nor does it know.</li> </ol>