

## Editor's Notes for *Se glorien los mundanos* (CPE-167)

Here is another *villancico* and (or intended as) a *Baile de Seises* composed by Hilarión Eslava. The source manuscript is from the archives of the Catedral de Sevilla, obtained in early 2023 via the Institución Colombina. This is my second transcription of this piece, the earlier one in 2020 having been based on a copied manuscript obtained from the Biblioteca Histórica Municipal de Madrid. Based on its source and date, the Sevilla score is the presumptive original; I have therefore treated it as the more authoritative version of the two. It furthermore includes a cello part, which was missing in the Madrid score. I have also taken advantage of this revision to find and correct a few errors from my earlier work, made format and sound improvements, and added a keyboard reduction.

*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>

This *villancico* is particularly charming, with its elegant orchestral accompaniment and a 3:4 time *estribillo* section that is very much reminiscent of the traditional *sevillana* dance. It was written specifically in honor of the *Santísimo (Sacramento)* or Blessed Sacrament, so it would have been most likely performed during the Feast of Corpus Christi (the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, in May or June). The date on the manuscript is 1837, only a few years after Eslava's installation as Master of the Chapel at the Catedral de Sevilla. Penciled-in notes on one of the *particellas* indicate that this *villancico* was performed after Eslava's death, in 1899, 1902, and 1906.

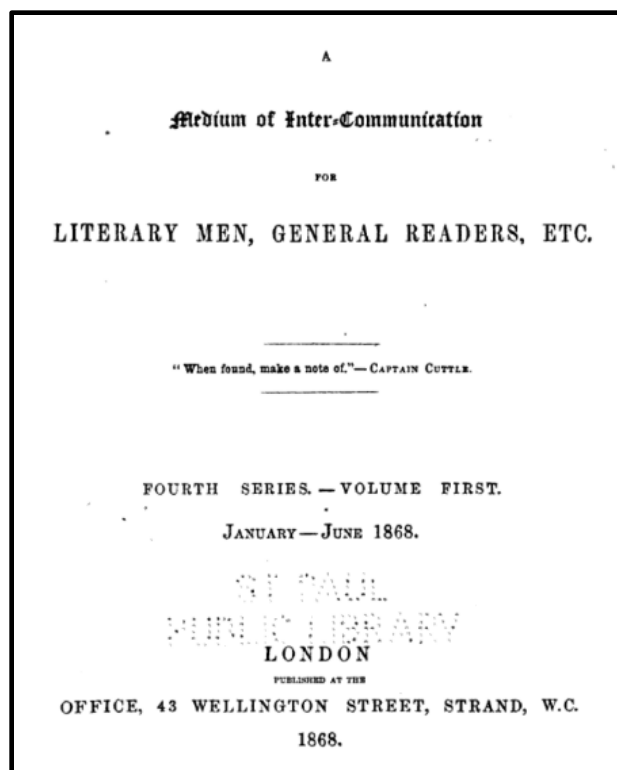
As an interesting side note, we found a reference to this exact composition in an 1868 English literary journal called "*Notes and Queries: a medium of intercommunication for literary men, general readers, etc.*" (see images below). On page 77 of this journal, contributor William Scott mentions that 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 that he was able to obtain the full orchestral score to this piece "at some cost and much trouble" from the Maestro de Capilla.

Mr. Scott provided 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 Sevilla from 1832-1844, he moved to Madrid in 1844. Mr. Scott states that his acquisition occurred around 1850, so it was most likely through Eslava's successor in that position, probably without his superiors' knowledge or blessing.

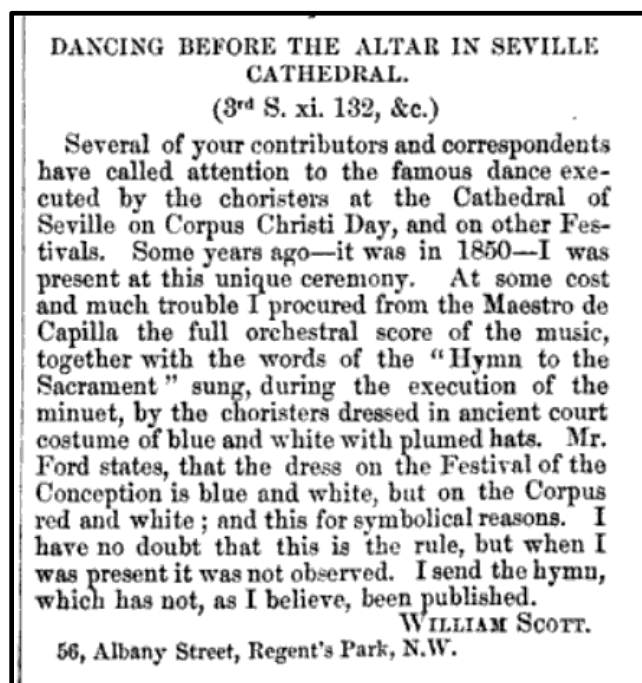
Following are a few more detailed observations about the score:

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. As is my custom, I have added numerous dynamics, articulations, and tempo variations to improve the audio playback, but these are invisible as they are a matter of personal preference.
3. No dynamics whatsoever were provided for the vocal parts. I felt leaving it that way would cause confusion to singers, so I have added in visible dynamic indicators that complement the dynamics found for the other parts.
4. 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.

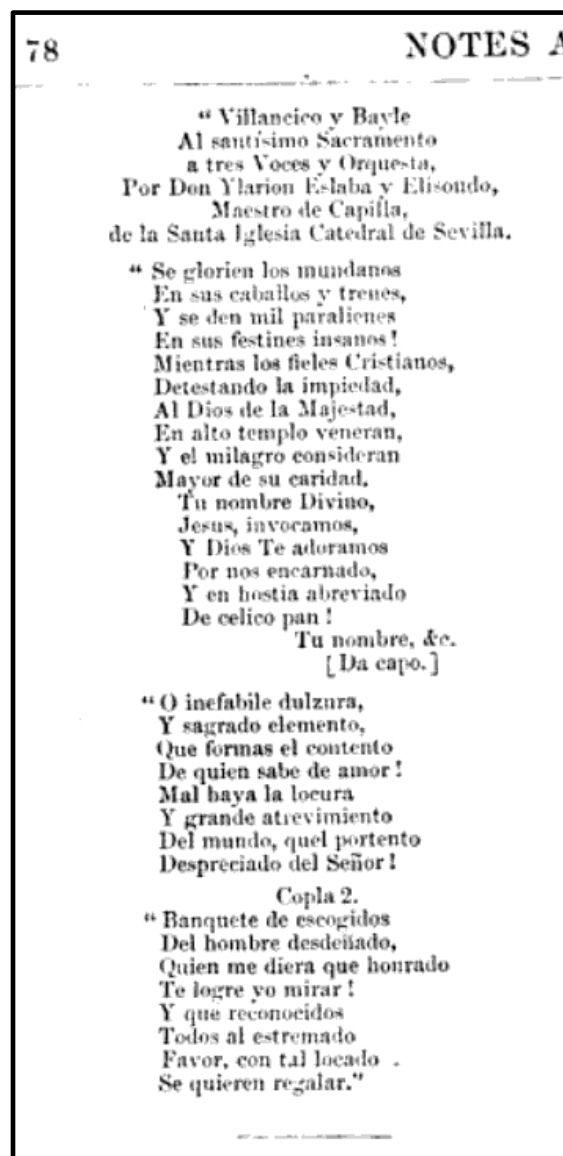
Synthesized audio renditions of this piece are provided as generated by MuseScore 4®, with its own native 'voice' settings (oohs and aahs), and, as of September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, an experimental version with AI-generated high voices singing the lyrics of the *villancico* in Spanish, created using the Synthesizer V Studio Pro 2® app with various adaptations of the 'Felicia' voice option, and the MuseScore 4 orchestral accompaniment. I don't consider the results of this latter voice setting entirely satisfactory, but they may be viewed as a learning experience and a skill and a technology that should improve with time.



*Title Page from 1868 journal*



*Excerpt from Page 77 of journal*



*Excerpt from Page 78 of journal*

Spanish Lyrics	Approximate English Translation
<p>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.</p> <p>ESTRIBILLO  Tu nombre Divino,  Jesús, invocamos,  y Dios, te adoramos,  por nos encarnado,  y en hostia abreviado  de célico pan.</p> <p>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!</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Let the worldly boast  on their horses and retinues,  and bless themselves thousandfold  in their ruinous feasts!  While the faithful Christians,  loathing impiety,  the God of Majesty  in His high temple venerate,  and the miracle admire,  the greatest of His charity.</p> <p>REFRAIN  Your Divine name,  Jesus, we invoke,  and God, we adore you,  for us made incarnate  and turned into a host  of heavenly bread.</p> <p>VERSES:  1. O! Ineffable sweetness,  and sacred nourishment,  that brings delight,  to those who recognize love,  accursed be the madness  and great audacity  of a world that despises  the Lord's portent!</p> <p>2. Banquet for the chosen  despised by man,  How I wished that thus honored,  I might someday behold you!  And that with everyone invited  to the extravagant  favor, in such a morsel  they may delight.</p>