

Scintillating baroque ...



... *Serious fun*

Missa Mexicana

Festive polyphony & popular dances from 17th-century Mexico

Soloists, Vocal Ensembles & Double Choir

Hispanic Continuo-Ensemble:

Organ, harp, sackbut, bajón, baroque guitars & percussion

Directed by

Andrew Lawrence-King

Spanish Harp

Missa *Ego flos campi*

Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla (c1590-1664) (Puebla Cathedral, Mexico)

Spanish and South American *villancicos*

Padilla, Francisco de Vidales, Joan Cererols & Juan Garcia de Zéspedes

Hispanic & African dances and *romances*

Lucas Ruiz de Ribayaz & Santiago de Murcia

“Missa Mexicana is at once thought-provoking and toe-tapping - an all too rare combination in classical music these days.” Barnes & Noble

“Beautifully sung ... haunting loveliness ... exuberant ... verve and abandoned gusto ... superlative ... spell-binding ... exhilarating” Fanfare

“Foot-tapping ... irresistible”

The Times

“An intoxicating mix of voices and exotic instruments ... total technical command and inspired imagination.. a revelation not to be missed”

BBC Music Magazine

MISSA MEXICANA

The Harp Consort

Clara Sanabras – soprano, guitar
Tuuli Lindeberg –soprano

Jennie Cassidy - alto
Veera Railio – alto

Julian Podger – tenor, guitar
Ian Honeyman – tenor

Marco Scavazza – baritone
Paul Willenbrock - bass

Steven Player -dancer, baroque guitar

David Yacus – sackbut
Paolo Tognon – bajón, bajoncillo

Leif Meyer - organ
Ricardo Padilla – percussion, guitar

Andrew Lawrence-King – Spanish baroque harp, director

Missa Mexicana

In the mid-seventeenth century, Mexico's Puebla Cathedral boasted a rich musical tradition, modelled on Old Spain yet influenced by the exotic rhythms of the New World and by the rich harmonies of African music, brought to central America by slaves from the Ivory coast. Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla, whose mass "*Ego flos campi*" forms the centre-piece of this concert, was born in the south of Spain and was *maestro de capilla* in Jerez and Cadiz, before crossing the Atlantic to take up the post of assistant in Puebla. He became *maestro de capilla* there in 1629.

This conservative, formal style was regarded as a reflection of the ancient splendour and solemnity of the holy Mass, but Padilla brings the old forms to life with driving rhythms and sparkling syncopations. Just as the composer himself left Spain to make his home in the New World, his musical style was grounded in the traditions of the Golden Age and then nurtured by the colours and rhythms of central America.

Padilla's music breathes the spirit of the dance, and the details of individual dance-types were preserved by Ribayaz's 1677 book *Luz y norte* - Lantern and North Star - an explorer's guide to Hispanic dances. The most famous of these dances was the *xácara*, sung in the dialect of the back streets of Madrid and traditionally accompanied by an ensemble of guitarists dressed in black Spanish cloaks, with daggers hidden in their sleeves. This 17th-century street music became fashionable even in high society, as Spanish composers used the vivid rhythms and dance-energy of the *xácara* to drive forward the plots of operas and to introduce theatrical excitement even into church music. Indeed, in Christmas *villancicos* by Padilla and by his colleague, Francisco de Vidales [the principal organist at Puebla cathedral], the text draws the listeners' attention to the secular origins of the music: "Here's a new *xácara*" "Always with the *xácara* attitude" "Come on, come on, let's do the *xácara* now!"

This programme is not a liturgical reconstruction but a concert, bringing together dance-like religious settings with their original *bailes*, the actual dances that inspired them. The authenticity is not only musical, but cultural, revelling in the complex cross-currents of conservatism and experiment, of naiveté and sophistication, high and low art, intellectualism and sensuality, that characterise the Hispanic baroque. For whilst the 17th-century congregation and the clergy of Puebla cathedral listened to Padilla's Mass interspersed with his Christmas *villancicos*, they would have been inescapably reminded of the raw origins of the *xácara* dance.

Andrew Lawrence-King

Kyrie - Villancico

Fantasia *Consonancias y redobles*
Kirie [Missa *Ego flos campi*]

Luis Milan '[*El Maestro* 1534]
Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla (c1590-1664)

Gloria - Xácaras

Gloria [Missa *Ego flos campi*]
Jácaras de la costa
Galliardas *El gran duque* [Luz y norte]

Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla
Santiago de Murcia (c1682-fl 1714)
Lucas Ruiz de Ribayaz (1677)

Credo - Chaconas

Credo [Missa *Ego flos campi*]
Chaconas [Luz y norte]
Negrilla *A siolo flasiquiyo*

Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla
Lucas Ruiz de Ribayaz
Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla

Sanctus - Cumbées

Sanctus [Missa *Ego flos campi*]
Cumbées

Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla
Santiago de Murcia

Folías - A lo humano

Les Folies d'Espagne
A lo humano: *Marizápalos bajó una tarde*

Raoul Auger Feuillet [*Chorégraphie* 1700]
Anon 17th century Peru

Agnus Dei - Marizápalos

Diferencias sobre marizápalos
Agnus Dei [Missa *Ego flos campi*]

Miguel Pérez de Zavala (fl 1690)
Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla

Guaracha

Canarios [Luz y norte]
Guaracha *Convidando está la noche*

Lucas Ruiz de Ribayaz
Juan García de Zéspedes (1619-1678)

The Mass was edited by Mapa Mundi & Andrew Lawrence-King, the Villancicos by Jack Sage & Andrew Lawrence-King, the Romance & Dances by Andrew Lawrence-King.

The Harp Consort's award-winning recordings of **Missa Mexicana**, **Chorégraphie** & **Arte de fantasía** are available from Harmonia Mundi USA. **Jácaras**, featuring members of The Harp Consort is also available on HMU. **Luz y norte** is on the DHM label.

Missa Mexicana

Missa Mexicana

Legend would have it that angels descended from heaven in 1531 to construct the city which came to be called Puebla de los Angeles, strategically placed on the road from Mexico City to the port of Veracruz. A century later, Puebla cathedral boasted a rich musical tradition, modelled on Old Spain, yet influenced by the exotic rhythms of the New World and by the rich harmonies of African music brought to central America by slaves from the Ivory coast. Juan Gutierrez de Padilla was appointed *maestro de capilla* in 1629, and a decade later Archbishop Juan Palafox y Mendoza arrived to preside over, to encourage by his patronage, and to support with his personal wealth a period of glorious artistic achievement.

By 1645, Padilla's ensemble of singers, harpists, organists, *bajonistas* and *violón*-players comprised 28 men and 14 boys, the finest choir in all Spain's foreign dominions. The Archbishop's magnificent library was founded in 1646, and the new cathedral was consecrated in 1649, its apse adorned with an exquisite 16th-century Andalucian wood-carving of the Virgin, and with García Ferrer's depictions of the Adoration of the Kings and of the Nativity, with Archbishop Palafox himself portrayed as one of the shepherds. Cristóbal de Villapando's later 17th-century decoration of the cupola shows the Virgin, the Holy Trinity and various characters from the Old and New Testaments, with an angel choir singing and playing instruments.

In the cathedral nave, enclosed with high screens in the Spanish manner, Padilla's mortal choir provided liturgical music for the conventional occasions: Latin masses, motets, vespers psalms, hymns, responsories, passions, lamentations, litanies, settings for Holy Week, Easter and Marian feasts. They also delighted the congregation with freshly-written *villancicos*, set to the sensual rhythms of popular dances, and representing the vernacular speech-patterns of stock characters drawn from the many ethnic groups that populated *nueva españa*: haughty Portuguese, rugged Basques, bucolic peasants – the *villanos*, cheeky street urchins, *indios* mixing broken Spanish with their native Náhuatl tongue, exuberant black dancers from Guinea, Puerto Rico and Cuba.

The accepted idiom for church music was modelled on the renaissance polyphony of the Spanish golden age, the *siglo de oro*. Just as Italian composers of Monteverdi's generation distinguished the *prima prattica* style of religious polyphony from the "new music" of the Baroque, so Padilla and his predecessor, Gaspar Fernandes, employed a deliberately old-fashioned musical language for their liturgical settings. The *seconda prattica*, the progressive style of early Italian opera, was an intellectual construct – an imitation of the expressive power of classical Greek drama, moving the audience's emotions with chromatic harmonies and angular melodic gestures in speech-like recitative. In contrast, the new music of New Spain was derived from popular culture –swaying listeners' hearts by moving their feet to the

persuasive rhythms of sensual dances. In Hispanic theatrical music, the use of specific dance-melodies colours the mood of each scene - an aural equivalent to stage scenery. Similarly in church: each dance lends a particular character and defining rhythmic energy to its *villancico*, as well as entertaining the congregation with a popular tune that everyone would know.

Padilla's duties required him to teach polyphony but also to compose new *chanzonetas* each year for such major feasts as Christmas or Epiphany [the feast of the Three Kings]. Many texts draw attention to this love of novelty - "listen to the nice new *xácara*", "novelty of novelties", "novel comic interludes" - but Spanish culture was also fascinated with the aesthetic of the *contrafactum*, the art of creating new pieces based on existing masterpieces. Just as the great cathedrals were constructed over many years, and by several generations of craftsmen, so musical works were built on a foundation of earlier material.

Thus we see a fondness for theme and variation forms, for repeated refrains, for adding new contrapuntal voices to existing polyphony, and for endless literary and musical cross-references. Padilla's *A la xácara xacarilla* is structured as a poetic medley, citing the opening lines of one or more well-known *romances* in each stanza, whilst each singer has a different melody to sing over a repeating ground bass, that bass itself a sequence of *xácara* variants.

Padilla, whose mass "*Ego flos campi*" forms the centre-piece of this programme, was born in the Andalucian city of Málaga, and was *maestro de capilla* in Jerez and Cádiz, before travelling to Puebla to take up the post of *cantor* and assistant to Fernandes. He taught singing and *violón*-playing, and also managed an instrument-making workshop, selling *bajónes* (bass dulcians) and *chirimías* (shawms) across the whole country. The conservative, formal style was regarded as a reflection of the ancient splendour and solemnity of the holy Mass, but Padilla brings the old forms to life with driving rhythms and sparkling syncopations. Just as the composer himself left Spain to make his home in the New World, his musical style was grounded in the traditions of the *siglo de oro* and then nurtured by the colours and rhythms of central America.

Ego flos campi is a so-called "parody mass" - the polyphony is created by myriad re-workings of material from an pre-extant motet. In this case, the original motet has not survived, but Padilla's techniques can be observed in other parody masses he wrote, based on his own motets. Certain memorable melodic phrases and harmonic sequences recur as motives, especially at the beginning and end of each movement, but often with the counterpoint inverted or subtly transformed. Sometimes the voices combine in genuine eight-part writing, more often they are separated into two antiphonal choirs, exchanging short phrases in catchy speech-rhythms. In *Ego flos campi*, Padilla takes considerable liberties with the liturgical text, creating refrains that

suggest the religious fervour of a gospel-meeting and hint at the didactic, evangelising purpose of music in the colonial church: “Goodwill to all men!”, “Have mercy upon us!”, “I believe!”, “I acknowledge!”, “Lord God of Hosts!”

Even in this formal style, Padilla’s music breathes the spirit of the dance, and details of individual dance-types are preserved in collections for guitar or harp by such composers as Santiago de Murcia, and Lucas Ruiz de Ribayaz. Most of these books begin with the most famous of these dances, the *xácara*, sung in the dialect of the back streets of Madrid and traditionally accompanied by an ensemble of guitarists dressed in black Spanish cloaks, with daggers hidden in their sleeves. This 17th-century street music became fashionable even in high society, as Spanish composers used the vivid rhythms and dance-energy of the *xácara* to drive forward the plots of operas and to introduce theatrical excitement even into church music. Indeed, in Christmas *villancicos* by Padilla, by his successor as *maestro*, Juan García de Zéspedes, and by Francisco de Vidales (principal organist), the text draws the listeners’ attention to the secular origins of the music: “on with the *xácara*!”, “a jaunty style and voice are always needed”, “dance the *canario* and the *villano*” “celebrate with the *guaracha*” “with the *gaucambe*”

The attitude of the church authorities to these *villancicos* was at best ambivalent. The *xácara* and similar dances were repeatedly (and thus, one presumes, ineffectually) condemned as excessively arousing, yet Pedro Cerone, author of the famous 17th-century treatise *El Melopeo y Maestro*, defended the *villancicos*, which he compared to the the *mascherate* sung at Italian carnivals: “One hears now a Portuguese, now a Basque; once an Italian and once a German; first a gypsy, then a black man I would not like to say *villancicos* are bad thing, for they are received in all Spanish churches, and were it not for them, it would not be possible to reach the appropriate heights of solemn celebration... There are some people so lacking in piety that they attend church but once a year, and miss all the Masses of Obligation, because they are too lazy to get up out of bed. But let it be known that there will be *villancicos*, and there is no-one more devout in the whole place, none more vigilant than these people, for there is no church, oratory or shrine that they will not visit, nor do they mind getting up in the middle of the night in the freezing cold, just to hear them.”

The *xácara* was normally in d minor, with a simple alternation of tonic and dominant harmonies, triple and hemiola rhythm, but a major-mode variant was known as the *jácaras de la costa*, perhaps originally associated with the Veracruz region, where local traditions have preserved to the present day many features of 17th-century instruments and their playing styles. The secular text for the *marizápalos* appears at first glance to be an innocent pastoral ballad, but every line contains a *double entendre*, revealing a sub-text of high-flown eroticism, an almost spiritual celebration of the act of love. Nevertheless, even this *romance* could be adapted *a lo divino* to create “a faithful metaphor” in seraphic harmonies.

The *cumbees* is one of several African-inspired dances, linked to the *zarambeques*, *guacambe*, *paracumbe*, to the Afro-Cuban *guaracha* and to the Afro-Hispanic patios of the *negrilla*. The solo variations - *diferencias* – come from a Mexican guitar manuscript, recently identified as the lost book of dance-music by Santiago de Murcia: the African dance titles provide scat syllables for the improvising singers. Other dances, such as the *corrente*, were of Italian origin, but given a distinctively Spanish flavour by means of a syncopated triple rhythm with the accent on the second beat of the bar. This characteristic rhythm creates the swing and atmosphere – the *aire* – of 17th-century Hispanic music, a quality that English contemporaries called the “Spanish humour”.

Just as musicians played *diferencias* over the repeated harmonic sequence of the *xácara* and other ground basses, so dancers would improvise choreographic variations – *mudanzas* – on the basic steps of each dance. Vocal music too was often in the form of verses - *coplas* – and chorus – *estrebillo*, avoiding the bi-polar contrasts of the Italian *da capo* aria in favour of ballad-style narration or meditative contemplation. Jerónimo Nadal’s highly successful book of New Testament engravings *Adnotaciones et meditationes*, first published in 1595, shows a tableau indentifying just those key elements of the Christmas story that are celebrated in the *villancicos*: the city of Bethlehem, the Baby and the Virgin with the ox and ass in lowly attendance, the humble stable door that is also the gateway of heaven, the angel choir singing to the shepherds, the star guiding the three kings.

Certain poetic conceits can also be found in many *villancicos*: the contrast between the icy winter outside the stable and the fire of divine love within, the Babe who cries whilst the world rejoices, revelling choristers singing rousing choruses to lull the baby to sleep, metaphors of flowers and stars. Two suns chase away the darkness, one in the heavens, the other the resplendent light of the newborn Babe. God is the judge, the godfather, the divine giant; the Christ-child is the lover, the hero, the flower amongst thorns; Mary is the beloved, the dawn, the pearl of pearls, the flower of flowers. Such elegantly poetic titles can be found even in a raunchy *xácara*, or alongside the simple names of humble street entertainers: Antón with his tambourine, Gil dancing to the bagpipe-playing of Antón Pascual, Miguel dressed as a parrot, or Antonio in a monkey-suit.

In all kinds of Hispanic music, from street *xácaras* to court operas and elegant chamber music, the guitar was seen as the characteristic instrument of the new, baroque style. Ribayaz explained technicalities of harp-playing in terms of guitar chords; an 18th-century tutor for the castanets classifies rhythmic patterns in relation to the up- and down-strum of the guitar; a quartet of guitars – each one a different size and pitch – formed a consort that was, together with the Spanish harp, considered an indispensable element of the rhythm and mood of the *aire español*. A set of six matched Veracruz baroque

guitars was specially constructed by Tacho and Wendy Utrera for this project, under the supervision of Eloy Cruz in Mexico City and according to the consort principles first established by THC's guiding guitar guru, Pat O'Brien.

Harp and guitars combine with bass viol, lyre and organ in the high style; with *bajón*, shawms and sackbut in large-scale choruses; and in dance-music with all kinds of traditional instruments: tambourines, large African drums, woodblocks, shakers, the simple box-drum played by itinerant musicians throughout Latin America, small bells, rainstick, psaltery and even - in the *jácaras de la costa* – a conch shell.

This programme is a musical exploration, not a liturgical reconstruction, bringing together dance-like religious settings with their original *bailes*, the actual dances that inspired them. The authenticity is not only musical, but cultural, revelling in the complex cross-currents of conservatism and experiment, of naiveté and sophistication, high and low art, intellectualism and sensuality, that characterise the Hispanic baroque. For whilst the 17th-century congregation and the clergy of Puebla cathedral listened to Padilla's Mass interspersed with festive *villancicos*, they would have been inescapably reminded of the raw origins of the *xácara* dance.

Andrew Lawrence-King

The Mass was edited by Mapa Mundi, the Villancicos by Jack Sage, Clifford Bartlett & Andrew Lawrence-King, the Dances by Andrew Lawrence-King

Negrilla *A siolo flasiquiyo*

iA siolo flasiquiyo!
¿Qué manda siol Thome?
¿Tenemo tura trumenta
templarita cum cunsielta?
Si siolo ven pote
avisa bosa mise
que sa lo moleno ya
cayendo de pularrisa
y muliendo pol bayla
llamalo llamalo aplisa
que a veniro lo branco ya
y lo niño aspelandosa
y se aleglala ha ha ha ha
con lo zambomba ha ha ha ha
con lo guacambe con lo cascave
Si siñolo Thome
repicamo lo rrabe
ya la panderetiyo Anton
baylalemo lo neglo al son.

Responsion

Tumbucutu cutu cutu
y toquemo pasito querito
tumbucutu cutu cutu
no pantemo a lo niño sesu

Coplas

Turu neglo de Guinea
que venimo combirara
A detla e su criara
Munglave con su liblea.
Y plunque lo branco vea
quere branco nos selvimos
con vayal de un tamo plimo
y haleme a lo niño bu.

De merico y silujano
se vista Minguel aplisa
pues nos culase su clisa
las helilas con su mano
Bayle el canario y el villano
mas no pase pol detlas
de mula que da lasas
de toro que dira mu.

Antoniyo con su sayo
que tluxo re pueltorrico
saldra vestiro re mico
y Minguel de papangayo
Y quando yegue adorayo
al niño le dira asi
si tu yo lamo pol mi
yo me aleglamo por tu.

Marizápalos a lo humano:

‘Ah, Mr Francisco!’
‘At your command, Mr Tomás!’
‘Do we have all the instruments
tuned up together?’
‘Yes sir, you could well
tell your lady
that the dark-skinned folk are about to
appear, falling about with laughter
and dying to start dancing.’
‘Call them out right away,
for the White One has come now
- the resplendent Child –
and he will rejoice, ha ha ha ha!,
with the *zambomba* [drum], ha ha!
with *guacambe* dancing and bell-ringing.’
‘Yes, Mr Tomás,
we’ll strum the rebec
and Antón jingling the tambourine, all we
black people will dance to their sounds.’

Response

Boom boom kaboom!
and let’s play gently, softly,
Boom boom kaboom!
lest we disturb baby Jesus.

Stanzas

All of us, blacks from Guinea,
have come and we’ll invite
Andrea and her maid,
and Mongrave in his livery.
And so that the White One may see
we love white, we’ll dress
in fine, fleecy white cotton
and say "Boo!" to the baby.

Let Miguel dress up quickly
as a doctor-surgeon,
so the knife in his hand
may heal our wounds.
Dance the *canario* and the *villano*,
but don’t step behind
a mule that kicks out,
nor a bull that goes "moo!"

Antonio, wearing the smock
he brought from Puerto Rico,
will come out dressed as a monkey,
and Miguel as a parrot .
And when he goes up to adore
the babe he’ll say to him:
‘if you cry for me,
I’ll be made happy by you.’

Marizápalos baxó una tarde

al verde Sotillo de Vaciamadrid,
porque entonces, pisándole ella,
no hubiese más Flandes que ver su país.

Estampando su breve chinela,
que tiene ventaja mayor que chapín,
por bordar con sus perlas las flores,
el raso del campo se hizo tabí.

Marizápalos era muchacha
y enamorada de Pedro Martín,
por sobrina del cura estimada,
la gala del pueblo, la flor del abril.

Al sotillo la bella rapaza
de su amartelado se dexó seguir,
y llevando su nombre en la boca,
toda su alegría se le volvió anís.

Al volver la cabeza la niña
fingió de repente el verle venir
y fue tanto su gusto y su risa,
que todo el recato se llevó tras sí.

Recibióle con rostro sereno
y, dándole luego su mano feliz,
aguardarle en la palma le ofrece
toda la victoria cifrada en jazmín.

Dijo Pedro, besando la nieve,
que ya por su causa miró derretir:
«En tus manos más valen dos blancas
que todo el Ochavo de Valladolid».

Merendaron los dos en la mesa
que puso la niña de su faldellín,
y Pedrico, mirándole verde,
comió con la salsa de su perejil.

Pretendiendo de su garabato
hurtar las pechugas, con salto sutil
respondió Marizápalos «¡Zape!»,
llevando sus voces cariños de «¡Miz!»

Al ruido que hizo en las hojas
de las herraduras de cierto rocín,
el Adonis se puso en huida,
temiendo los dientes de algún jabalí.

Era el cura que al soto venía
y, si poco antes aportara allí,
como sabe gramática el cura,
ipudiera cogerlos en el mal latín!

Marizápalos went down one evening
to lush Vaciamadrid Grove,
that, setting her foot upon it, the meadow
might flourish beyond all compare.

As she stepped with her dainty slipper,
finer by far than cork-soled clog, seeking to
embroider its flowers with pearls, the
meadow turned its satin into watered silk.

Marizápalos was a lass
in love with Pedro Martín, esteemed
because she was the priest's niece, the
toast of the town, the flower of Spring.

Into the grove the lovely girl
allowed her lovesick swain to pursue her,
and when she brought his name to her lips
his joy came with the flavour of aniseed.

Turning her head towards him,
she pretended only then to see him come;
so great was her delight and laughter
that all caution was thrown to the winds.

She welcomed him with a serene smile
and, holding out straightway a happy
hand, offered him unconditional surrender
in her jasmine-scented palm.

Said Pedro, kissing that snowy-white skin
as it melted under his gaze: "In your
hands two *blancas* [coins] are worth all
the *ochavos* [gold] in Valladolid."

The couple picnicked on a table
made by our young girl from her petticoat,
and young Pedro, seeing how fresh her fare
was, ate it with his own parsley sauce.

As his twitching hands
sought out her breasts, with a sly little
start Marizápalos cried 'Shoo!'
in a loving tone of voice more like 'Pussy!'

Hearing the sound of horse-hoofs
rustling the fallen leaves,
our Adonis took to his heels,
fearing the tusks of some boar or other.

'Twas the priest on his way to the grove
if he had come onto the scene a little
earlier, knowing grammar as he did,
he would have caught them out using bad
Latin!

Guaracha *Convidando está la noche*

Convidando está la noche
aquí de músicas varias
Al recién nacido infante
canten tiernas alabanzas
Alegres cuando festivas
unas hermosas zagalas
Con novedad entonaron
juguetes por la guaracha

Coplas

¡Ay, que me abraso, divino dueño,
en la hermosura de tus ojuelos, ay!

¡Ay, cómo llueven ciento luceros
rayos de gloria, rayos de fuego, ay!

¡Ay, que la gloria del portaliño
ya viste rayos, si arroja yelos, ay!

¡Ay, que su madre, como en su cielo,
mira en su lucencia sus crecimientos, ay!

¡En la guaracha le festinemos
mientras el niño se rinde al sueño, ay!

¡Toquen y bailen, porque tenemos
fuego en la nieve, nieve en el fuego, ay!

¡Pero el chicote a un mismo tiempo
llora y se ríe, qué dos extremos, ay!

¡Paz a los hombres dan de los cielos,
a Dios las gracias porque callemos, ay!

Night-time was an invitation
for various bands
to sing tender, joyful hymns
to the new-born babe,
whereupon some lovely, festive girls
intoned novel
comic interludes as
the *guaracha* was being danced.

Stanzas

Ah, how I burn, divine master,
in the beauty of your little eyes!

Ah, how a hundred stars pour down
rays of glory, rays of fire!

Ah, how the glory of the little gate [of
Bethlehem] is bathed in sunlight even as it
shoots out icy shafts!

Ah, how his mother, as if transported to
his heaven, watches him grow in the light
he creates!

Let us drink a toast to the child
with our *guaracha* while he goes to sleep!

Let them play and dance, because we have
fire in the snow, snow in the fire!

But the little fellow at one and the same
time cries and laughs, what two extremes!

Peace from heaven to all men is given;
let all give thanks to God, for we now may
be silent!

English translations & edition of Spanish texts by Jack Sage