

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Historically Informed Performance of the Baroque *Villancico de Negro* Subgenre in a  
Contemporary Setting

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## ABSTRACT

Performance Practice of the Baroque *Villancico de negro*

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The *villancico de negro* is a Baroque paraliturgical subgenre that rose to popularity in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries on the Iberian Peninsula. Colonialism promoted the spread of Spanish practices in the Americas, and the *villancico de negro* developed in both Spain and New Spain. This genre capitalized on misrepresentational techniques that mock African people by using caricatures and specific character roles. Written from a European lens, the *villancico de negro* uses language, characters and imagery through music and text to portray an idea of African people and musical features. While this music has been revived around the world, this document explores the nature of performing this music in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the challenges presented in performing a historically informed performance of the *villancico de negro* today, and why such performances are inappropriate.

## DEDICATION

*In memory of my grandfather, who passed one day after this document was submitted.*

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## INTRODUCTION

### PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is to examine the components of the Baroque *villancico de negro* subgenre, investigate both its function and nature of performance during a colonial time period, and conclude whether this music should be performed today. This document will analyze scores and texts of the *villancico de negro*, investigate poets and composers within the subgenre, explore the validity of authentic African representation and performance practices, and survey contemporary groups who continue to perform *villancicos de negro* around the world.

### PERSONAL STATEMENT

My primary goal in writing a dissertation was to discover parts of the world outside of the United States that were influenced by West African music. During my doctoral residency at Northwestern University, I talked with chairman of the Music Studies department, Drew Davies, who is a scholar on music of Latin America in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Davies introduced me to the *villancico de negro* subgenre, and I committed to an independent study with him, allowing me to research and dissect the dissemination of the *villancico de negro*. In this study, I learned of its colonial past, and what countries of Latin America continue to perform it.

In an effort to learn more, I applied for the Frank Huntington Beebe Fund for musicians. I became a recipient of this award, and used it to travel to Mexico and Spain to conduct research and collect information from scholars and performers who were familiar with the subgenre. In Mexico City, Mexico I conducted interviews with notable musicians

Aurelio Tello and Eloy Cruz, explored manuscripts in the Archive of the Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral, and worked with scholars at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). I also became part of the Musicat Seminario: a network of scholars and specialists around the world who study the music of New Spain in the Baroque. As a part of the Musicat Seminario, I learned from these specialists, as well as presented my own findings on the *villancico de negro* subgenre in monthly seminars. In my travels to Spain, I gained membership to the National Library of Spain, which allowed me to view collected works of composers, as well as find rare scholarship on the *villancico de negro*. In Madrid, I was able to interview Alvaro Torrente, one of the most prominent scholars in Spanish Baroque music, and professor at the Complutense University in Madrid. I also attended concerts and church services that featured *villancicos* in Madrid and Barcelona.

In my academic year abroad in Mexico and Spain, I gained a deeper understanding of the intended function of the *villancico de negro* and learned more of its colonial past. I believe sharing my research with the choral community within the United States will promote an awareness of the *villancio de negro* subgenre, as well as educate audiences on contemporary performance practices that exist today.



## ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

The first chapter discusses the dissemination of the *villancico* genre from the 15<sup>th</sup> through the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The word *villancico* is first attached to poetic form in songbooks, and adapts to encompass other music throughout the Baroque until its decline. This chapter discusses the liturgical function of the *villancico*, and introduces subgenres that became prominent in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, namely the *villancico de negro*. The chapter also gives musical examples of how the *villancico* genre has changed over time.

The second and third chapters explore components of the *villancico de negro*, including the development of black characters, language, imagery and symbolism. The second chapter also discusses an African presence in Spain, as well as the enslavement of African slaves in Spain and New Spain during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The fourth and fifth chapters survey composers and poets who contribute to the *villancico de negro* largely during the period of colonialism. The chapters discuss their contributions, as well as catalog their outputs. Chapter 5 gives specific attention to Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Luis de Góngora y Argote who wrote *villancicos de negro* in a unique fashion in comparison to other poets of the time.

Chapter 6 analyzes the components of a historically informed performance (HIP) and how they affect the nature of performing the *villancico de negro* in a contemporary setting. Chapter 7 then lists contemporary choral groups of Spain and Latin America that specialize in performing *villancicos de negro*. The chapter discusses the nature of their

performance, as well as methods and beliefs the ensembles use to justify performing *villancicos de negro*.

Chapter 8 answers the question “*Is it acceptable to perform the villancico de negro in a contemporary setting?*” The chapter juxtaposes colonial history within the United States and Latin America, presents challenges of using the components of the *villancico de negro* today, and concludes with a commentary on the acceptability of modern performances.

## CHAPTER 1: An Introduction to the *Villancico* Genre

As one of the most important genres for Spanish Baroque literature, the *villancico* is often overlooked and undervalued. However, due to scholarship and interest in Spanish Baroque literature of the last fifty years, the *villancico* genre and its subgenres, including the *villancico de negro*, are being rediscovered, recognized, and explored. As such, the *villancico* has emerged as the most significant vernacular genre of the Iberian Peninsula and the New World of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. This chapter will discuss the diffusion of the *villancico*, as well as its role in Spanish Catholic liturgy, as a way of introducing the *villancico de negro*.

### Origin and History of the *Villancico*

From a literary perspective, the term *villancico* is used well before the Baroque, and can be found referring to a poetic form in a 15<sup>th</sup>-century French songbook, *Chansonnier Espagnol d'Herberay des Essarts*. Written between 1461 and 1464, the *Chansonnier* contains a short poem that carries the title “*Villancico*,” with a form of aabbba.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, the Portuguese term “*Villançete*” is used slightly earlier in the *Cancionero de Estúñiga* and is attributed to Carvajales circa 1458.<sup>2</sup> The term is also used in Spanish songbooks, such as the *Cancionero musical de palacio* composed between 1490 and

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<sup>1</sup> Isabel Pope and Paul R. Laird, “*Villancico*,” in *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online Oxford University Press, accessed November 27, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/29375>.

<sup>2</sup> Natalie Vodovozova, “A Contribution to the History of the *Villancico de Negros*” (diss., University of British Columbia, 1996) 5.

1520. This songbook is a collection of nearly five hundred songs that mirror the Italian ballata, or the French virelai in poetic form.<sup>3</sup> While the word is loosely applied to several poetic and musical works, the first description of a *villancico* is found in Juan Encina's *Arte de poesia castellana* from his *Cancionero*, completed in 1496:

If the refrain has two lines we may call it a *mote* [motto] or a *villancico* or a *letra* usually of the poet's invention. ... If it has three complete lines and one half-line, it will likewise be called a *villancico* or *letra* of the poet's invention.<sup>4</sup>

While the description compares the term to others, this description only solidifies that the form of a *villancico* is up to the discretion of the poet. Just under one hundred years later, the definition emphasizes that the *villancico* can be either poem or song, with a refrain and any number of stanzas. Díaz Rengifo also mentions such a definition in his 1592 *Arte poética*, drawing comparisons to the Italian ballata;<sup>5</sup> he writes that, similar to the ballata, the *villancico* had a 'head' and 'feet' paired in a number of ways. Up to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the term *villancico* became attached to Iberian songs that have an *estribillo* (refrain). Other non-liturgical songs with topics of courtly love are entitled *canción* (song). While early-recorded definitions do not ascribe to any set musical/poetic form, pieces labeled with the term *villancico* usually mirror that of the French *chanson*, or Italian madrigals and their dance form derivatives. By the end of the 1500s, the *villancico* exists as a

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<sup>3</sup> Owen Rees, "Villancico," in *The Oxford Companion to Music*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed November 29, 2017, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e7147>.

<sup>4</sup> Isabel Pope and Paul R. Laird. "Villancico."

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

secular dance genre performed in the vernacular, consisting of an optional Introduction, and a malleable assortment of an *estribillo* (refrain), and *coplas* (stanzas) consisting of a *mudanza* (first part of a strophe), and a *vuelta* (ending of a strophe).

Sixteenth-century vocal polyphony and musical textures inspired a few changes in the *villancico*. Repetition in polyphonic textures, employing simpler and shorter lines, required less use of text. Texts were often reduced to one *estribillo*, and one *copla* with varying *vuelas*.<sup>6</sup> Examples of *villancicos* from this period can be observed in two song books, one of which is the *Cancionero de Upsala* of 1556, also known as the *Villancicos de diversos autores*. Although mostly anonymous, this songbook contains *villancicos* attributed to the well-known composers Cristobal Morales and Mateo Flecha. The increasing presence of paraliturgical *villancicos* is evident in the *Cancionero de Upsala*. Of the fifty-five *villancicos* that are in this collection, sixteen are sacred, dedicated to the Virgin Mary.<sup>7</sup> Along with *Rú, rú, chíu*, one of the most popular, there are eleven other Christmas *villancicos* included in this songbook as well. The other songbook, *Cancionero Musical de Barcelona*, completed in 1534, also reflects a similar collection of 16<sup>th</sup>-century *villancicos*.

Toward the close of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the sacred *villancico* grew in popularity within church settings. The Counter-Reformation brought about a Catholic resurgence. On the Iberian Peninsula, devotional/religious music took precedence; sacred *villancicos*,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

identical to secular ones in regard to form, melodic, and harmonic content, began to outnumber the secular ones. Composers and poets modified secular texts to suit liturgical settings.<sup>8</sup> Sacred *villancicos* are initially performed during large feasts and festival days. As Christmas is one of the most festive times of the liturgical calendar, performances of nativity-themed *villancicos*, including those in the vernacular, took place during Advent season, a tradition that continues within the Spanish-speaking world since introduced in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Sacred *villancicos* flourished well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century, while those performed in the vernacular were banned under Spanish rule under orders of King Phillip II. Although this ban was not very effective, it was implemented to curb the performance of the popular light-hearted and comedic *villancicos* in other dialects, considered to be a distraction from devotion.<sup>9</sup> After the death of Phillip II, the ban was lifted; performances of *villancicos* and similar genres with vernacular texts were reinstated by Phillip IV. The 17<sup>th</sup>-century *villancico* also transformed from a genre that accrued religious association, to a sacred genre predominantly performed in religious institutions. In church, *villancicos* were performed by a relatively small ensemble (usually male), or a group of soloists, usually one voice on a part. In liturgy, churches used *villancicos* as replacements for responsories in Matins and other feast day services, especially capitalizing on Christmas and Epiphany. Composers began setting texts for large sets of *villancicos*, averaging eight per set (including a *villancico de negro*), and concluding with

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

a setting of a Te Deum.<sup>10</sup> Paul Laird writes that the chapel master at León Cathedral was required to supply between sixty and seventy new *villancicos* per year.<sup>11</sup> In an effort to find worthy texts, Spanish composers would recycle and exchange texts of *villancicos* through manuscripts, and *pliegos sueltos* printed for Matins services.<sup>12</sup> In fact, often when in search for *villancico* texts, chapel masters solicited *pliegos sueltos* from colleagues. In 1993, a study on the dissemination of *villancico* texts within the network of Spanish religious institutions was executed in Madrid, Spain utilizing manuscripts, and the database known as the International Inventory of Villancico Texts.<sup>13</sup> This project served as a way to track the usage of circulating *villancico* texts, and the methods of *villancico* text exchange.

Among the many roles music played in the Baroque period, two stand out as particularly relevant to this study: to praise the power and grandeur of the monarchy, and to inform the educated commoner and nobility that they are a form of social criticism.<sup>14</sup> In regard to the latter purpose, *villancico* texts developed to cater toward social phenomena. The genre incorporates characters from popular culture such as noted leaders and fictional characters. While staying within the parameters of liturgical appropriateness (or so they believed), the *villancico* included a portrayal of politics, peasant lifestyle, ethnic groups,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Laird, "The Dissemination of the Spanish Baroque *Villancico*," *Revista De Musicología* 16, no. 5 (1993): 2.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Julie Ann Sadie, ed. *Baroque Companion to Music* (University of California Press, 1998), 327.

and slaves as observed in the *villancico de negro* subgenre. Such themes and characters used within the genre represent contemporaneous culture and societal structure.

At the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the *villancico* adapted to other music conventions of the time, taking on influences of the Italian cantata and concertato style. Instrumentation expanded, music became more theatrical, and the *villancico* began to lose its original simple character by growing more and more elaborate.<sup>15</sup> *Coplas* were replaced with recitatives and arias, and several instrumental sections were added in Italian fashion.<sup>16</sup> Musicologist Alvaro Torrente argues that the *villancico* itself did not become more theatrical, rather, the style of theatre music changed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>17</sup> As Italian opera influenced Spanish zarzuela and art song, the *villancico* adopted a similar path with the same Italian influences. However, entering the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the taste for theatrical music began to change; Italian styles dominated Europe, and the *villancico*, along with other genres, lost its identity and no longer functioned as a predominant genre in the Spanish Church. One by one, churches either limited the use of *villancicos* to those without vernacular texts, or implemented a ban. Chapel masters began reverting to responsories and *villancicos* with only Latin texts in Matin services.<sup>18</sup> In 1798, the Malaga chapter voted to banish the use of all *villancicos*, regardless of their intended liturgical function.

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<sup>15</sup> Alvaro Torrente, Malcolm Boyd, Juan José Carreras eds., *Music in Spain during the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 73.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 74.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> John Swadley, "The *Villancico* in New Spain 1650–1750: Morphology, Significance and Development" (PhD diss., Canterbury Christ Church University, 2014), 58-63.



It was not long before other churches followed suit, including cathedrals in Cádiz, Compostela, Granada, Jaén, Santander, Santiago de Compostela, and Pamplona.<sup>19</sup>

Though no longer a prevalent genre, Christmas and Epiphany *villancicos* continued to be performed in some Spanish churches into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Printed music and *pliegos* of *villancicos* are documented until the 1840s in the following cities: Avila, Córdoba, Madrid, Mallorca, Palma, Toledo, Valladolid and Valencia.<sup>20</sup> As their use was limited to Christmastide, they no longer employed texts for other Feast days or specific services. In fact, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onward, *villancicos* became synonymous with Christmas carols. This modern definition has been affixed to the word *villancico*, and currently remains the sole function in the Iberian Peninsula, as well as Latin America.

#### Music of the *Villancico*

The form of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century *villancico* is relatively free, but remains consistent in having two components, the *estribillo* and the *copla*. Most *villancicos* are in three or four voice parts, and are similar in style to other Renaissance genres: homophonic, with the text written in the upper voice, or contrapuntal, with paired voices set in a low tessitura. Most *villancicos* are to be performed a capella. Few 17<sup>th</sup>-century *villancicos* are composed with continuo instruments, and some with small chamber ensemble (as exemplified with Jersualem's *Despierta, Bato*). Examples of such scores can be found in the *Cancionero de Palacio*, which is currently located in the *Biblioteca Nacional de España*. Compiled in

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<sup>19</sup> Alvaro Torrente. *Music in Spain during the 18<sup>th</sup> century*, 74.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

the 1470s, this Iberian songbook originally contained 548 works, with an additional eleven added in the half-century following.<sup>21</sup> The surviving manuscript was transcribed and published in 1890 with the title “*Cancionero musical de los siglos XV y XVI*” (Musical Songbook of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries) by Spanish musicologist Francisco Asenjo Barbieri.<sup>22</sup> The songbook has 458 surviving entries; Juan Ponce’s *Allá se me ponga el Sol* (259) is a good example of the homophonic style.

Ex: 1-1 Juan Ponce’s “*Allá se me ponga el Sol*,” extracted from the *Cancionero de Palacio*

259 PONCE.

TIPLE. A - llá se me pon - ga el Sol don de ten -  
an - tes que me mu - rie - se con es -

CONTR.

TENOR.

CONTR.

445 FIN.

go el a - mor A - llá se me pu - sie - se  
te de - lor do mis a - mo - res vie - se

D.C. 8

<sup>21</sup> Francisco A. Barbieri, “Summary,” in *Cancionero Musical de Palacio*. *Biblioteca Digital Hispánica, Biblioteca Nacional de España*, accessed Nov. 20, 2018, <http://bdh.bne.es/bnearch/Search.do>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Ex: 1-2 Modern notation of “*Allá se me ponga el Sol,*” transcribed by James Gibb

**Allá se me ponga el Sol**

Juan Ponce  
(1480-1521)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

5

A - llá se me pon-ga\_el Sol Don-de ten - go\_el a - mor, don-de ten -

10

15

go\_el a - mor. A - llá se me pu-sie- se Do mis a - mo - res vie - se,

go\_el a - mor. A - llá se me pu-sie- se Do mis a - mo - res vie -

go\_el a - mor. A - llá se me pu-sie- se Do mis a - mo - res vie -

go\_el a - mor. A - llá se me pu-sie- se Do mis a - mo - res vie -

20

An - tes que me mu - rie - se Con e - ste do - lor.

se, An - tes que me mu - rie - se Con e - ste do - lor.

se, An - tes que me mu - rie - se Con e - ste do - lor.

se, An - tes que me mu - rie - se Con e - ste do - lor.

As noticed in the manuscript, it is visually reminiscent of other genres of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>-century Renaissance. This *villancico* is written in two parts containing an *estribillo* and two *coplas*. The piece is written in triple meter, scored for four, a cappella voice parts, and has a seemingly low tessitura, ranging an octave from G 3– G4. Disregarding the bass, a perfect fourth is the largest interval observed in the alto voice, while the majority of the composition is written in step-wise motion. The implementation of *musica ficta* is observed at the end of each authentic cadence in the alto voice, completing the phrase. The nature of the text is secular, which is not uncommon for this transitional period where both sacred and secular *villancicos* were in circulation. Spanish literature explored rural love, pastoral settings, picturesque landscape, and personal sentiments of pain, pleasure, and death. All aforementioned concepts are present within this *villancico* text:

### Catalan

*Allá se me ponga el Sol*

*Donde tengo el amor.*

*Allá se me pusiese*

*Do mis amores viesse,*

*Antes que me muriere*

*Con este dolor.*

### English translation

There the Sun sets

Where I have love.

There I would get

Where my loves see,

Before I died

With this pain.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Translation by author.

The 17<sup>th</sup>-century *villancico* takes on styles represented in other European countries, specifically Italy. 17<sup>th</sup>-century music in the Italian peninsula observes an emphasis on melody and focus on solo performance, more instruments and instrumental genres, and a more established concept of tonality with harmony that focuses on chordal and tertian relationships. The mixing of timbres and textures as contrast becomes favored, as demonstrated in the concertato style. This style incorporates contrasting groups of voices, instruments, and soloists over a basso continuo accompaniment; born in Venice, it spread to other parts of northern Italy, Germany, and soon thereafter other parts of Europe, eventually reaching Spain. Some of these musical characteristics can be observed in Alonso Xuárez' (1640 – 1660) *villancico Los Pastores de Belén*.

Ex: 1-3 Alonso Xuárez “*Los Pastores de Belén*,” B section (*estribillo*) mm. 36-42, and solo (*copla*) mm. 43-62

5

36

TI.  
1er. C

tu - ya, va - ya, va - ya, tu ya!

TII.  
1er. C

tu - ya, tu - ya, tu - ya!

Ctrl.  
1er. C

tu - ya, ¡Va - ya de dan - za, va - ya, tu - ya!

Te.  
1er. C

dan - za, va - ya! ¡Va - ya de dan - za, va - ya, va - ya!

TI.  
2º C

va - ya, tu - ya, va - ya, tu - ya!

Ctrl.  
2º C

va - ya, tu - ya, tu - ya, tu - ya!

Te.  
2º C

va - ya, tu - ya, tu - ya, tu - ya!

B.  
2º C

va - ya, tu - ya, tu - ya, tu - ya!

Bjo.  
2º C

Acto.

6

43 Solo

Ctrl.  
1er. C

Y pues el so - ne - ci - llo del tam - bo - ri - li - llo los

Acto.

48

Ctrl.  
1er. C

ma - les es - pan - ta, ¡va - ya to - na -

Acto.

53

Ctrl.  
1er. C

di, to - na - di - - -

Acto.

59

Ctrl.  
1er. C

-lla, to - - na - di - lla de gra -

Acto.

This Christmas *villancico* is an example of how the *villancico* adapted to conventions of the time. Written in triple meter, the scoring is for eight-voice ensemble, soloist, continuo, and a treble instrument for the interlude. The chorus is split into two ensembles, *cori spezzati* (separated choirs) style, and designed to be performed antiphonally, with

each phrase sung in an alternating homorhythmic pattern. In this manner, the text is clear to the listener, there are no overlapping phrases among the ensembles, and individual phrases are often repeated. *Cori spezzati* style originated in Italy with the Venetian school; beginning with Adrian Willaert (1490-1562), it was perfected by Giovanni Gabrieli (1554-1612). Following the *estribillo* is a solo treble voice accompanied by a continuo instrument, most often a plucked string, such as the vihuela, which replaced the Renaissance lute in Spanish Baroque music.<sup>24</sup> This solo writing creates a contrast to the grander antiphonal writing, presenting text in a clear and rapid manner, with simple and direct melodic writing, almost entirely in step-wise motion.

As previously mentioned, theatrical music rose in prominence in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; operatic styles appeared in many genres of Western music, and the *villancico* adapted. Specifically, the 18<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of comic opera, with recitative and aria becoming more clearly defined. Similarly, forms in the non-dramatic genres were solidified, namely the concerto, sonata, and symphony.

*Villancico* texts in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were largely devoted to Christmas and Epiphany. Colonized New Spain developed respective religious institutions and centers of music making. Mexico became home for many composers and chapel masters of the Western art tradition, who often infused native/indigenous culture into compositions. Ignacio de Jerusalem is a good representative of these composers; a transplant of Spain, he

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<sup>24</sup> Manfred F Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era (From Monteverdi to Bach)*, (London: J. M. Dent & Sons 1948), 47.



developed and influenced Mexican Baroque music, directing musical activities for the *Coliseo de México*, and becoming chapel master of the Cathedral of México in 1750.<sup>25</sup> His *villancico*, *Despierta, Bato* is written for three treble voices, two violins, and continuo. The *villancico* is written with two structural parts, recitative and aria; in the recitative, each of the three voices speak in succession until all come together in the final four bars. The recitative singing resembles closely that of Italian opera – syllabic and in short phrases over continuo.

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<sup>25</sup>Jesús A. Ramos-Kittrell, "Ignacio Jerusalem: Politics in Music Thought with the Arrical of Parvenu," *Revista De Musicología* 38, no. 1 (2015): 83.

Ex: 1-4 A modern transcription of the recitative section of *Despierta, Bato*, by Ignacio de Jerusalem, mm 1-6

## Depierta, Bato

### Villancico

Music by Ignacio de Jerusalem

Arranged by Tyrone Clinton

Violin I

Tacet

Violin II

Recitativo

Soprano

Despier-ta Ba-to dormi-lón, vi-lla-no, y lla - ma-a Gi-la, que

Alto

Tenor

Continuo

Vln. I

Vln. II

S

Siem-pre\_es-tá ron - can-do es-cu - chad un lu -

A

que\_es-tás re-fun-fu - ñan-do

T

qué me quie-res?

Cont.

7

Vln. I

Vln. II

S

ci - do\_án - gel que\_ad - vier - te que\_en sue-ños mues - tra sin ha - cer-nos da - ño,

A

T

Cont.

The aria is more florid, beginning with an instrumental introduction for both violins and continuo, with a meter of 3/8. The text is light-hearted in nature, and at times comedic, as one of the three characters is a bat. The three speak of going on an adventure to Bethlehem to bring the little baby Jesus gifts.

Ex: 1-5 A modern transcription of the aria section of “*Despierta, Bato*,” by Ignacio de Jerusalem, mm 34-75

## Despierta, Bato

villancico

Music by Ignacio de Jerusalem

Arranged by Tyrone Clinton

The musical score is arranged in three systems. The first system (measures 34-40) features Violin I, Violin II, and Continuo. The second system (measures 41-47) features Vln. I, Vln. II, and Cont. The third system (measures 48-54) features Violin I, Violin II, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Continuo. The Soprano part includes the lyrics: "Ay, qué chi - qui - to tan pu - li - di - to,". The music is in 3/8 time and B-flat major.

5

Vln. I

Vln. II

S

A

T

Cont.

tan pu - li - di - to,

Ay qué me - ji - llas tan ro - sa - di - llas

©

2

Despierta, Bato

Vln. I

Vln. II

S

A

T

Cont.

Ay, qué pre - cio - so, Ni - ño gra - cio - so

15

Vln. I

Vln. II

S

A

T

Cont.

ay, que al mi - ra - lle, por a - li - via - lle de

ay, que al mi - ra - lle, por a - li - via - lle de

ay, que al mi - ra - lle, por a - li - via - lle de

ay, que al mi - ra - lle, por a - li - via - lle de

While its liturgical purpose has not changed since its decline, the history of the *villancico* genre is quite different from its current function. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it is first observed as a loose term referring to a secular poetic form found in several European songbooks. Well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the definition became known as a refrain form, mimicking other European music forms of Italy and France. The presence of sacred *villancicos* became evident toward the close of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in several *Cancioneros* on the Iberian Peninsula, primarily addressing the Virgin Mary, in adoration and events of Advent season. The 17<sup>th</sup>-century *villancico* became predominantly sacred in nature, and solidified a standard form as an introduction, an *estribillo*, and two to three *coplas*. Churches used *villancicos* to replace Matins, and at times they were a form of comedic relief, as observed in the *villancico de negro* subgenre. Musically, the *villancico* began to use devices and conventions of the Baroque, which include, *cori spezzati*, *concertato* style, recitative and aria, and basso continuo. Toward the end of the Baroque, the *villancico* no longer held its own identity within the church as a result of its rapid mutation to other

styles and theatrical genres. With its decline heading into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, *villancicos* became identical to Christmas carols in the Spanish-speaking world and are currently still recognized as such during Christmastide.

## CHAPTER 2: Introduction to the *Villancico de negro* Subgenre

As stated in the previous chapter, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the *villancico* genre grew to incorporate figures of politics, peasant life, and other ethnic groups serving as a form of comedic relief. *Villancicos* with ethnic characters began to have other titles such as *gitanos*, *guineos*, *negrillos*, and *negros*. These specific titles implied that the corresponding *villancico* portrayed African characters, thus creating the subgenre, *villancico de negro*. The *villancico de negro* subgenre explores a multitude of topics and issues concerning race, ethnicity, and gender representation as portrayed by Spaniards, the Spanish Church, and Latin America between the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. A discussion of the nature of music, text, and content of the *villancico de negro* during this period is essential in understanding the subgenre through a contemporary lens.

### Development of Black Characters

Slavery began on the Iberian Peninsula far beyond expansion to the Americas and the beginning of the colonial period. The African population in 16<sup>th</sup>-century Seville was 7.4 percent, the highest in Spain and notably higher than in any other European country. With the rise of this population, black characters and their place in society began appearing in various forms of literature. The earliest examples are found in Portugal, where black characters were incorporated into theater and other forms of literature; the Spanish soon followed the trend.<sup>26</sup> By the 1600s, Golden Era poets and playwrights like Cervantes

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<sup>26</sup> Carolina Santamaria, "Negrillas, Negros, Guineos, y la Representacion musical de lo Africano," *Cuadernos de Música, Artes Visuales y Artes Escénica*, 2 no. 1 (October 2005 – March 2006): 4-20.



(1547-1616) and Lope de Vega (1562-1635) had already formed a negative stereotype of blacks within literature. Lope de Vega used many African characters in his plays; they were typically from Africa, spoke *habla de negros*, and worked in areas of craftsmanship, textile manufacturing, manual labor, and farming. Evidence of such characters can be viewed in plays such as: *La madre de la mejor*, *La limpieza no manchada*, and *El Santo negro Rosambuco de la ciudad de Palermo*.<sup>27</sup>

There also exist examples of blacks being portrayed as “good” characters, more human-like than in these stereotypical satires. In Lope de Vega’s *El Negro del mejor amo*, a black prince named Antiobo defends the Sardinians from the Turks. In Andrés de Claramonte’s *El valiente negro de Flandés*, Juan de Mérida is a black man that serves under the Duke of Alba and becomes leader of the Dutch Wars, a general viewed as a part of the nobility.<sup>28</sup> These characters are all inspired by the life of Juan Latino (1518-1596), a black professor in Granada, Spain during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup> Juan Latino was born Juan de Sessa, and served as a slave to Spanish warrior Gonzalo de Córdoba. Sessa adopted Christianity and learned to read literature from the books of Córdoba’s son, eventually becoming the son’s tutor. He soon accrued the last name “Latino” as an honor from being so exceptional in Latin and other forms of literature. He graduated with honors in 1557 from the University of Granada, where he also assumed a professorship.

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<sup>27</sup> Frida Weber de Kurlat, “Sobre el negro como tipo cómico em el teatro espanol del siglo XVI,” *RPh* 17, (1963) 380-91.

<sup>28</sup> Andrew Sobiesuo, “Images of Blacks and Africa in Spanish Literature,” *Journal of Dagaare Studies* 2, 2002, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.520.5856&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

While this story is quite the anomaly, Juan Latino and the characters influenced by him are valorized because they are viewed through the perspective of white Europeans.

Although born slaves, they adopt Christianity, speak perfect Castilian Spanish, battle other European countries, and become examples for *viceregal* Spain. These black characters resemble the lives of the Spaniards they serve, indeed, becoming more white.

Analyzing the function and articulation of text as in the *habla de negros* demonstrates the way Africans were portrayed in Spanish literature from the 15<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. As noted, African characters played specific, stereotyped roles in Spanish literature, particularly in the *villancico de negro*. These included: 1. lords of the dance; 2. childlike figures absent of education; and 3. beings less than human, but capable of becoming more humanized by finding answers to hardship through Christianity and the Virgin Mary. In this excerpt from Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla's "*Ah siolo Flasiquiyo*," the first of these stereotypes is apparent, the two characters discussing black's responsibility and devotion to dance.

<b>Habla de negros</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>English translation</b>
<i>"¡A siolo flasiquiyo!"</i>	<i>Ah señor Francisco!</i>	Ah, Mr. Francisco!
<i>"¿Qué manda siol Thome?"</i>	<i>Que manda, señor Tomás?</i>	What's up, Mr Tomás?
<i>"¿Tenemo tura trumenta templarita cum cunsielta?"</i>	<i>Tenemos todo instrumento templadito con conciencia?</i>	Do we have all the instruments tuned up together?
<i>"Sí siolo ven poté avisa bosa misé que sa lo molemo ya cayendo de pularrisa y muliendo pol baylá"</i>	<i>Si, señor venga podré avisar Vuestra Merced que está el Moreno ya Cayendo de pur risa Y moriendo para bailar</i>	Yes sir, I can tell your majesty that the dark-skinned one is already falling about with laughter and dying to start dancing.
<i>"llámalo llámalo aplisa que a veniro lo branco ya y lo niño aspelandosa y se aleglala ha-ha ha-ha con lo zambamba ha-ha ha- ha..."</i>	<i>llámalos llámalos aprisa que a venirlo blanco ya y el niño esperando y se alegrará ha-ha ha-ha con la zambomba ha-ha ha- ha...</i>	Call them, call them out quickly, for the white one has come now and the resplendent Child is waiting, and he will rejoice, ha ha ha ha!, with the zambomba (drum), ha ha ha ha!...
<i>"Sí siñolo Thome repicamo lo rabe ya la panderetiyo Antón baylalemo lo neglo al son."</i>	<i>Si señor Tomás Repicamos el rabe y ya a la pandereta Antón Bailaremos los negros al son.</i>	Yes, Mr Tomás, we'll strum the rebec and Antón jingling the tambourine, all we black people will dance to their sounds. <sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Translation by author.

Note the obligation to bring joy through dancing and the playing of instruments. Note also the juxtaposition of white and dark in this text: the “white one” is the character of importance, and the “dark-skinned one” is ready to serve the white person through dance, as it makes everyone happy, including the “black people.” The responsibility highlighted is servitude through dance, and in a speedy fashion, as it is disrespectful to keep the white man waiting.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s *Villancico 7 - Negrillo*, was composed in Puebla around 1678. It depicts African characters using their musical talents as devotion. Here, Sor Juana highlights that the main instrument being played by the two African cousins is a guitar. They both plan to go to Bethlehem and sing a Sarabande to God. While playing instruments and singing is something we have previously observed, what is most striking about this Christmas *villancico* is the idea of two non-European characters playing an instrument not of their native land, singing in a music style that does not stem from Africa.

<b>Habla de negros</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>English translation</b>
<i>Ah, siñol Andlea</i>	<i>Ah, señor Andrés</i>	Hey Mr. Andrew
<i>Ah, Siñol Tomé</i>	<i>Ah, señor Tomás</i>	Hey Mr. Thomas
<i>Tenemo guitarra?</i>	<i>Tenemos una guitarra?</i>	Do We have a guitar?
<i>Guitarra tenemo.</i>	<i>Una guitarra tenemos.</i>	We have a guitar.
<i>Sabemo tocaya?</i>	<i>Sabemos tocarla?</i>	Do we know how to play it?
<i>Tocaya Sabemo.[...]</i>	<i>Tocarla sabemos. [...]</i>	We know how to play it. [...]
<i>Pue vamo turu a Belé</i>	<i>Pues vamos todos Belén</i>	So let’s all go to Bethlehem

<i>Y a lan Dioso que sa yoranda</i>	<i>Y al Dios que está llorando</i>	And sing a Sarabande
<i>Le cantemo la salabanda.</i>	<i>Le cantemos la zarabanda.</i>	To God who's crying.
<i>Paléceme ben.</i>	<i>Me parece bien.</i>	Sounds good to me.
<i>Y a mi también.</i>	<i>Y a mi también.</i>	To me too.
<i>Toca, plimo pol tu fe. [...]</i>	<i>Toca, primo, port u fe. [...]</i>	Play cousin, for your faith. [...]
<i>A lo Pesebre yeguemo</i>	<i>Al pesebre lleguemos</i>	Let's arrive at the manger and to
<i>Y a lo són de trumentio,</i>	<i>Y al son del instrumento,</i>	the sound of the instrument
<i>Guitarra y panderiyo</i>	<i>Guitarra y pandereta,</i>	Guitar and tambourine
<i>Hagamo fiesta en Belé</i>	<i>Hagamos una fiesta en Belén</i>	Let's have a party in Bethlehem <sup>31</sup>

This depiction of Africanness by Sor Juana uses a contemporary Christian perspective; it inaccurately paints a portrait of African participation in society in which two African slaves engage in a spontaneous musical interaction that emphasizes Christian ideals, highlighting their proficiency in European art forms and with European instruments. Indeed, these inaccuracies are magnified by the reflection of Psalm 150 throughout the entire *villancico*, in which faith and the praising of God through musical instruments is exalted.<sup>32</sup>

Sor Juana's *villancico de negro* placed European musical practices with African characters in an attempt to capture sounds of Africanness. In *villancicos de negro*, it is a

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<sup>31</sup> Drew Davies, "Indexing Africa in Christmas Season *Villancicos*," document unpublished, 4.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

common practice to observe pseudo-African instruments played by African characters. In reality, the gamut of instruments and sound making of Africans during this time differed quite drastically from music of the Western tradition, as discussed in detail below.

It is not surprising, through the lens of the European composer, that the *villancico* in the previous example confirms that African people were inferior to Europeans. It is far more rare to find a *villancico* that highlights the true servitude, work conditions, and laborious experiences by most Africans in Spain and New Spain. Yet, in the following *villancico* (discussed at length in Chapter 6), Sor Juana not only highlights other recognizable emotions experienced by African characters in *villancicos de negro*, but also mentions the work place, textile mills.

<b>Habla de negros</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>English translation</b>
<i>Igualde yolale</i>	<i>Voy a llorar</i>	I will weep
<i>Flacico, de pena</i>	<i>Flacico, de pena</i>	Flacico, with sadness
<i>Que nos deja ascula</i>	<i>Que nos deja oscura</i>	As all us Negroes
<i>A turo las Neglas</i>	<i>a todas las negras</i>	Are left in the dark
...	...	...
<i>Déjame yolá</i>	<i>Déjame llorar,</i>	Let me weep,
<i>Flacico, pol Ella,</i>	<i>Flacico, como ella</i>	Flacico, as She
<i>Que se va, y nosotlo</i>	<i>Que se va nosotros</i>	Is leaving, while us
<i>La Oblaje nos déjà.</i>	<i>Las obrajes nos déjà.</i>	Are left in the textile mills <sup>3334</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Tess Knighton, Alvaro Torrente, ed., *Devotional Music in the Iberian World, 1450-1800: The Villancico and Related Genres*, (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2007), 404.

<sup>34</sup> Spanish translation by author.

This is quite unusual for 17<sup>th</sup>-century New Spain (specifically 1676) literature to depict the harsh reality of African slaves, as well as exploring “sadness” and “darkness” as mentioned by one of the two characters. They also discuss being “left in the textile mills,” a place notorious for terrible working conditions for Africans in Mexico.<sup>35</sup>

#### African Origin in the *Villancico de negro*

Another characteristic of the subgenre is the use of African-influenced words to further implement an idea of Africanness. Often in the *villancico de negro* a reference to the African character’s homeland is stated. Places like Timbuktu, Guinea, and São Tomé are referenced, as well as instruments and dances that are meant to represent Africa. The following *villancico de negro* is an example.

<b>Habla de negros</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>English translation</b>
<i>Eso rigor e' repente:</i>	<i>Eso digo de repente:</i>	I say that suddenly:
<i>juro a qui se niyo siquito,</i>	<i>juro que ese niño chico,</i>	I swear that little boy,
<i>aunque nace poco</i>	<i>aunque nace un poco</i>	although he is born a little
<i>branquito turu</i>	<i>blanco,</i>	white,
<i>somo noso parente.</i>	<i>de nosotros es hermano.</i>	is our brother.
<i>No tememo branco</i>	<i>No tememos al gran</i>	We do not fear the great
<i>grande...</i>	<i>blanco...</i>	white...
<i>-Toca negriyo tamboriiyo.</i>	<i>Toca negrito el tamborcito.</i>	Play the tambourine black one
<i>Canta, parente:</i>	<i>Canta, hermano:</i>	Sing, brother:

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<i>"Sarabanda tenge que tenge, sumbacasú cucumbé". Ese noche branco seremo,</i>	<i>"Zarabanda baila que baila, Zumba casú cucumbé". Esta noche blancos seremos,</i>	<i>"Zarabanda dances dancing, Zumba casú cucumbé ". Tonight we will be white,</i>
<i>O Jesu que risa tenemo.</i>	<i>Oh, Jesús, que risa tenemos...</i>	<i>Oh, Jesus, what a laugh we have...</i>
<i>Vamo negro de Guinea...</i>	<i>Vamos negros de Guinea</i>	<i>Let's go black ones from Guinea</i>
<i>No vamo negro de Angola, que sa turu negla fea.</i>	<i>no vayan negros de Angola, que son todos negros feos.</i>	<i>do not go black ones of Angola, They are all ugly blacks.</i>
<i>Queremo que niño vea negro pulizo y galano, que como sa noso hermano, tenemo ya fantasia.</i>	<i>Queremos que el niño vea negros pulidos y hermosos, que, como es nuestro hermano, tenemos un gran deseo.</i>	<i>We want the child to see polished and beautiful blacks, that, as is our brother, we have a great desire.<sup>36</sup></i>

Notice the use of whiteness against blackness. The Black Guineans are dancing on Christmas Eve in celebration of the baby boy (Jesus), who is white. The Characters mention, "Tonight we will be white," signifying that being closer to whiteness is

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<sup>36</sup> Translation by author.



equivalent in being closer to Christ. This is consistent with the characters developed in the literature of Lope de Vega and Cervantes with characters influenced by Juan Latino. The uses of the pseudo-African words “zumba, casú, and cucumbé” have no true significance. Instead, the words refer to the name of a dance as the characters dance to the European-derived dance form, the Sarabande (a stately dance form in triple meter). While here the words are meant to be words that enslaved Africans would say once dancing commenced, that idea is fictitious.<sup>37</sup> In addition to the pseudo-African texts, this *villancico* uses not one, but two proposed regional birthplaces of enslaved Africans. The composer Gaspar Fernandes juxtaposes two African regions against one another, stating that the Africans from Angola are more “ugly” than those from Guinea. Another common reference to an African birthplace is Timbuktu, as observed in Padilla’s *Ah siolo Flasiquiyo*. Here in the Response, Flasiquiyo (Francisco) and Tomás are playing instruments as they welcome baby Jesus. They sing the word “Tumbuctú” to remind them of home.

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<sup>37</sup> Davies, 7.

Ex: 2-1a Modern revision of Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla's *Ah siolo Flasiquiyo*, by Aurelio

Tello, mm 94-1

94 Respensión a 6

[Tiple I] Tum - bu - cu - tú, cu - tú, cu - tú, y to -

[Tiple II] Tum - bu - cu - tú, cu - tú, cu - tú, Tum - bu - cu -

[Alto] Tum - bu - cu - tú, cu - tú, cu - tú, y to - que - mo pa -

[Tenor I] Tum - bu - cu - tú, cu - tú, cu - tú, y to - que - mo pa -

[Tenor II] Tum - bu - cu - tú, cu - tú, cu - tú, tum - bu - cu -

[Bajo] Tum - bu - cu - tú, cu - tú, cu - tú, y to - que - mo pa -

99

que - mo pa - si - to, que - ri - to, y to - que - mo pa -

tú, y to - que - mo pa - si - to, que -

si - to, que - ri - to, tum - bu - cu - tú, y to - que - mo pa -

si - to, que - ri - to, que - ri - to, y to - que - mo pa -

tú, y to - que - mo pa - si - to, que - ri - to,

si - to, que - ri - to, tum - bu - cu - tú,

In the second *copla*, the characters reference Guinea as the place where “All blacks are from” (“*Turu neglo de Guinea*”). The Juxtaposition of Timbuktu and Guinea further supports the idea that Africa is a homogenized country and not a continent.

Ex: 2-1b Padilla’s *Ah siolo Flasiquiyo* continued, mm. 124-135

124 Copla a Dúo

[Tenor]

1. - Tu - ru ne - glo de Gui - ne - a que ve - ni - mo  
ha de tla - é su cri - a - ra, mun gla - ve con

[Bajo]

1. - Tu - ru ne - glo de Gui - ne - a que ve - ni - mo  
ha de tla - é su cri - a - ra, mun gla - ve con

130

com - bi - ra - ra, y plu - que lo bran - co ve - a  
su li - ble - a,

com - bi - ra - ra, y plu - que lo bran - co ve - a  
su li - ble - a,

As mentioned previously, people of Africa are present on the Iberian Peninsula several centuries before colonialism begins in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as observed with Moorish/North African slave rule/slave trade. The slave trade of black Africans on the Iberian Peninsula was primarily dominated by Portugal in regions of North Africa, as well as the Sub-Saharan countries which include Niger, Senegal, and Sudan. By the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Portugal expanded slave exploration towards West Africa, which includes Mali, Guinea, and Nigeria. Again, the regions and places that are stated are used to incorporate the idea of Africanness from a European perspective. Timbuktu (ancient city of Mali), and Guinea

are places often referenced as home for African *villancico* characters. These regions (one being a city, and one being an entire country) were used to represent commercial origins for all African people. This also presents the idea that the continent of Africa is one large homogenized place with a central culture for all black Africans, while, in reality, black Africa was a conglomerate of over fifty countries with their own cultural identity.

## CHAPTER 3: African Presence in Spain and the Americas

### African Presence in Spain and the Americas

While the *villancico de negro* subgenre flourished between the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the history of people of African descent on the Iberian Peninsula significantly precedes this period. The African presence in Iberia can be traced back as far as Roman colonization and the conquest of North Africa. Moorish (North African Berber and Arab Muslim) rule had dominance since the Moors conquered Iberia in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38</sup> Moors traded slaves, with North African slaves being the minority. However, with the rapid production of commercial Saharan trade in North Africa, Niger, Sudan, and Senegal drew in more slaves than other regions in North Africa. Christian dominance and repopulation became stronger during the Christian Reconquest of Spain. Although Muslim presence decreased, the practice of slavery remained, as they enslaved those who were not practicing Christianity. In 1452, feeling threatened by non-Christian presence, Pope V gave orders to enslave those who did not practice the Christian religion.<sup>39</sup> Even ten years prior to this order, Pope IV had allowed Portugal to explore parts of West Africa. Portugal set up a slave port in Seville, Spain, and both Portuguese and the Spanish began exporting large quantities of African slaves out of West Africa. As mentioned, by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, African slaves were 7.4 percent of the population in Seville.<sup>40</sup> As the Spanish began to expand their Empire, they took their practices abroad; during the

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<sup>38</sup> Richard A. Fletcher, *Moorish Spain*, (University of California Press, 2006). 1-3.

<sup>39</sup> Olivia Constable, *Trade and traders in Muslim Spain: The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula, 900 – 1500*, (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>40</sup> Carl Skutsch, *Encyclopedia of the World's Minorities*, (Routledge, 2013), 32.

transatlantic slave trade they exported significant numbers of African slaves. The following table provides a total estimated number of slaves transported to each part of colonized Latin America from the year 1502 - 1866.

<b>Spanish Colony in the Americas</b>	<b>Estimated number of slaves</b>
Cuba	702,000
Puerto Rico	77,000
Mexico	200,000
Venezuela	121,000
Peru	95,000
La Plata and Bolivia	100,000
Chile	6,000
Dominican Republic	30,000
Colombia, Panama and Ecuador	200,000
Central America	21,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,552,000<sup>41</sup></b>

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<sup>41</sup> Phillip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin P, 1969).

Slaves in Spain and the Americas served in multiple working roles, their jobs varying due to location. The obvious agricultural medium for slaves was manual labor; they often worked on sugar cane plantations in the Canary Islands and other parts of the peninsula. Although it was a sign of luxury to own a slave, most Spaniards, regardless of their economic status, still managed to own another human being.<sup>42</sup> Royal slaves served aboard galleys. Nobles owned slaves and kept them in service or as a sign of wealth. Even those involved in monasteries, convents, universities, hospitals, and city councils are documented as slave owners. Merchants such as masons, tailors, cobblers, silversmiths and jurors possessed the largest number of slaves, allowing slaves to learn the role and responsibility of their owner's job.<sup>43</sup>

Slave contribution<sup>44</sup> was somewhat different in the Americas. In addition to cultivating plantations, Spaniards capitalized on African slavery in the New World through military services and craftsmanship; a slave could ascend as high as a soldier or squire. Slaves also contributed to cattle raising, fisheries, gold, and salt mines, and chiefly, the textile industry. Forced labor included domestic services as day-workers and street vendors. In addition, water sellers and latrine cleaners (*camungueros*) for male slaves, and washerwomen for female slaves.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Cortez Lopez, *La Esclavitud Negra en la España peninsular del siglo XVI*, (Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1989), 104-16.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Natalie Vodovozova, "A Contribution to the History of the *Villancico de Negros*," Masters diss., University of British Colombia, 1996, 33.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

The social rank of African slaves was, of course, the lowest on the social and economic ladder. In Spain, African slaves were not considered human, and were treated as such.

Via the lens of many Europeans, their physique and physical characteristics were considered undesirable and unattractive. Slaves were viewed as dull-witted and regarded as big children with a seemingly small ability to learn. Yet, they were regarded as good-natured as long as they adapted Christianity as their religion and were consistently submissive and loyal to their slave owners. The social rank of African slaves changed in the Central and South America with the enslavement of native people. African slaves became second to last in the social ranking, with indigenous people being at the bottom. As the African population steadily increased, far outnumbering the Europeans, African slaves began to rebel against their white slave owners, which led to escapes and revolts. Successful rebels, revolters, and run-aways formed communities called *palenques* in the mainland and defended themselves against European presence.<sup>46</sup> African slaves began to feel superior to native slaves, and desired freedom from enslavement, an act that was rare on the Iberian Peninsula. As a result, slaves within the Spanish New World colonies were treated in a far worse manner than those back in the Old World to instill fear of revolution and escape.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



## Confraternities

In Spain, in addition to their daily routines, African slaves were allowed a little freedom on festive days and Sunday, while still expected to fulfill their domestic responsibilities. The idea was to be free from work. Slaves were allowed to meet in taverns or in the inner city, as they did in the *La Plaza de Sana Maria la Blanca* in Seville, for example.<sup>48</sup> Men were allowed to go on pilgrimages together, which led to the development of brotherhoods called *confradías*. Both freedmen and slaves began to establish religious brotherhoods in as early as the 1400s. King Ferdinand received a petition for blacks to form a brotherhood in Valencia, without having to ask permission or require a permit, but to have the right to assemble for processions, parties and public acts.<sup>49</sup> In the Americas, African slaves united in *confradías* in a similar manner, but according to tribal origin. “These reunions were for the service, and for the reception of the sacraments; to maintain the social links of their respective communities, and provide them with the general participation of their recreation.”<sup>50</sup>

## *Habla de negros*

As later observed in the *villancico de negro* subgenre, those of African decent are portrayed as speaking a variation of the mother tongue of the European country that participated in their enslavement. Of the Iberian Peninsula, Portugal recorded African

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<sup>48</sup> Alfonso Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Andalucía 1450-1550*. Granada, (Universidad de Granada, 1992), 47-48.

<sup>49</sup> Gual Camarena Miguel, “Una cofradia de negros libertos en el siglo XV,” *Estudos de Edad Media de la Corona de Aragon*, 5 (1952): 458.

<sup>50</sup> Mercurio Peruano, “Idea de las congregaciones publicas de los negros bozales,” *Hesperiófilo de José Rossi Rubí* 2, no. 48 (June 1791): 112-17.

slaves as speaking *língua d pretos*, *falar guineu*, or *fala guiné*, which translates to “tongue of the blacks,” “to speak Guinean,” or “speech of Guinea.”<sup>51</sup> Often, the Iberian Peninsula referred to Africans as being from Guinea, a county of West Africa. While some slaves were indeed Guinean, Guinea was at times falsely documented and portrayed as the homeland for all African slaves. For Spain, Africans are portrayed speaking a dialect of Spanish called *habla bozal*, *habla de negros*, and *guineo*, which translates to “muzzled speech,” “speech of the blacks,” and “of Guinea.”<sup>52</sup> The basis of Afro-Romance linguistics, the authenticity of these languages, and the way such languages are portrayed in art and literature is somewhat undetermined and divisive. While tracing the dissemination of the Spanish language by region is not complicated, because it clearly leads back to the Iberian Peninsula, determining the authenticity of Afro-Hispanic linguistics by region is both an intricate and tortuous process because there are Latin, Indigenous, and African influences within the language.

*Habla de negros* is a Creole language, a mixture of one dominant language with the influence of another. In this case, Spanish is the dominant language, and the mother tongue of an African country (Guinea, perhaps) is the influencer. Some scholars believe the development of such a Creole language to be a pidgin, that is, a method of communication between two or more languages that do not have any common predecessor. Simplified versions of two or more primary languages are derived, taking on

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<sup>51</sup> John Lipski, “Convergence and Divergence in Bozal Spanish,” *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 1 (1986): 185-86.

<sup>52</sup> John Lipski, *Latin American Spanish*, (London: Longman 1994), 100.

characteristics of both primary languages and originating new ones.<sup>53</sup> Where indigenous, African, and Spanish presence was intertwined in the Americas, some scholars believe that *habla de negros* was not accurately represented in music and literature of the time, as in the *villancico de negro*.

Within the *villancico de negro*, the Spanish spoken is not equivalent to Castilian at the time. Often, words are missing letters, spelled incorrectly and incomplete, and pseudo words are used. These words are believed to have been used by Africans in a dialect unique to slave culture in Spain and New Spain.

A prominent characteristic of the *habla de negros* dialect portrayed in the *villancico de negro* subgenre excludes final consonants of words, which create a lazy effect when dropped. Examples follow:

<b>Consonant excluded</b>	<b>Spanish words</b>	<b>Habla de negros</b>
S	vamos, dejamos, más	vamo, dejamo, má
R	cantar, poner, por	canta, pone, po
D	Libertad, verdad	Libelta, nobela
N	Atención,	Atesió
Z	Paz	Pa

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<sup>53</sup> “Pidgin,” Merriam-Webster Dictionary, accessed Nov., 2018.  
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pidgin>.

Not only were consonants extracted, but some were replaced with others, often portraying the African character as uneducated and childlike.

<b>Consonant changed</b>	<b>Spanish words</b>	<b>Habla de negros</b>
R and Y for L	Negrito, negro morenillo, tocarla	Ninglito, neglo molinela, tocaya
S for C, Ch, J	Chiquito, musa, Jesus	Siquito, musa, Sesu
L for R	Señor, zarabanda, (me) parece, primo	Señol, salabanda, paléceme, plimo
Y for LL	Llorando, lleguemos, mantequilla	Yorando, yuemo, mantiquiya

Beginning consonants were also dropped off, creating aphesis, the loss of an unstressed vowel at the beginning of the word.

<b>Consonant changed</b>	<b>Spanish words</b>	<b>Habla de negros</b>
Es	Espantemos, estamos,	Pantemo, stamo
In	instrumento	Trumenta/trumentiyó

To represent the lack of education of blacks, the gender of nouns in Spanish are often misinterpreted in *villancicos de negro*.

<b>Consonant changed</b>	<b>Spanish words</b>	<b>Habla de negros</b>
Instrument	Pandereta, la zambomba	Panderiyo, lo zambamba
People	Los pastores, Los sagrados	Las pastola, la sagrada
Person	Don Emanuel	Do Manuela <sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Translations by author.

Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla's *villancico de negro Tambalagumbá* is an example of a black character exercising many features of *habla de negros*. In the first *copla*, notice how the letter "s" is extracted from the words "venimos," "negros," and "contentos," as well as the letter "l" being extracted from the word "portal." Several Letters are changed for others, as observed in the word "neglo," "contentos," "procisione," and "nacimiento." The gender of nouns is incorrect as seen in the words "contentos" and "nacimiento." Lastly, each *copla* ends with the pseudo African words "Ayahu, uchiha."

Ex: 3-1 Modern revision of Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla's *Tambalagumbá*, by Aurelio Tello, mm 45-56.

45 Copla[s]

T.I

1.A lo por tá de Be - - - le - - - ne  
a ha - - - ceu - na plo - ci - - - sio - - - ne

3.A lo ne glo de Vi - - - ca - - - lio  
ae seha - - - be - mo de ro - - - gá

5.A lo ne glo don Pe - - - li - - - co  
ae seha - - - be - mo de ro - - - gá

7.A lo ne glo don Pas - - - cua - - - le  
ae seha - - - be - mo de ro - - - gá

9.A lo ne glo de Fla - - - si - - - ca  
ae seha - - - be - mo de ro - - - gá

B.I

1.A lo por tá de Be - - - le - - - ne  
a ha - - - ceu - na plo - ci - - - sio - - - ne

3.A lo ne glo de Vi - - - ca - - - lio  
ae seha - - - be - mo de ro - - - gá

5.A lo ne glo don Pe - - - li - - - co  
ae seha - - - be - mo de ro - - - gá

7.A lo ne glo don Pas - - - cua - - - le  
ae seha - - - be - mo de ro - - - gá

9.A lo ne glo de Fla - - - si - - - ca  
ae seha - - - be - mo de ro - - - gá

49

ve - ni - - - mo ne - - - glo cum - - - ten - - ta,  
de - lan - - - te la na - ci - - - men - - ta.  
que di - - - ce so más hon - - - rra - - zo,  
que nos lle - ve la sen - - - sa - - rio.  
que te - - - ne glan - - - de la lo - - na,  
que lle - - - vea no - - - sa si - - - fio - - la.  
el - ma - - - no le Su se - - - pi - - llo,  
que lle - - - ve les biz - cu - - - chi - llo.  
e - - se que lla - - - ma - mo An - - tón,  
que guí - - - e la plo - ci - - - sión.

→ ve - ni - - - mo ne - - - glo cum - - - ten - - ta,  
de - lan - - - te la na - ci - - - men - - ta.  
que di - - - ce so más hon - - - rra - - zo,  
que nos lle - ve la sen - - - sa - - rio.  
que te - - - ne glan - - - de la lo - - na,  
que lle - - - vea no - - - sa si - - - fio - - la.  
el - ma - - - no le Su se - - - pi - - llo,  
que ye - - - ve les biz - cu - - - chi - llo.  
e - - se que lla - - - ma - mo An - - tón,  
que guí - - - e la plo - ci - - - sión.

53

A - - ya - - - hu u - - chi - - - ha ti - - -  
A - - ya - - - hu u - - chi - - - ha ti - - -

<b>Habla de negros</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>English translation</b>
<i>A lo porta de Belene</i>	<i>A lo portal de Belén</i>	To the portal of Bethlehem
<i>venimo neglo cumtenta,</i>	<i>venimos, negros (y) contentos,</i>	we come black (and) happy,
<i>a hace una plocisione</i>	<i>a hacer una procisione</i>	to make a decision
<i>delante la nacimenta.</i>	<i>delante del nacimiento</i>	in front the birth.
<i>Ayahu, uchiha, ...</i>	<i>Ayahu, uchiha, ...</i>	Ayahu, uchiha, ...

The representation of the language and actions of African people in literature like the *villancico de negro* subgenre is consistently poor and dishonorable. This use of language dehumanizes people of African countries, and misrepresents intellect and education; in fact, the use of language is a willful mockery of African slaves. The intended aphesis, the dropping of syllables, the confusion of gender and subject pronouns, and the addition and/or the reduction of syllables are clearly articulated in literature and demonstrate a standardized practice of portraying Africans in the Iberian Peninsula and the New World. These factors, which largely include speech and dialect, paint a vivid image of Africans as incapable of learning.

Nevertheless, there may exist in these works a record of how Africans in Iberia spoke non-native languages such as Spanish and Portuguese, encompassing some of the aforementioned factors. In the modern-day Latin American world, it is not atypical to hear the dropping of characters such as “s” in a colloquial setting, nor is it abnormal to hear “l” for “r” as in the word “señol” (“señor”). These factors can be heard in colloquial conversations, urban areas of Latin American countries where the African population is

denser, and in artistic outlets of Afro-Latin culture. The facets of the Spanish spoken in Latin America may be evidence of the remnants of African languages and their influence on the Spanish language over time. While some studies of Afro-Romance languages exist, such as Germán De Granda's *Estudios de lingüística afro-románica* or on the origins of *habla de negros*, as in Leturio Baranda's "*Las hablas de negros: Orígenes de un personaje literario*," a precise and true history on the dissemination of the Spanish language pre- and post-colonial period is difficult to ascertain. Still, while there are few congruencies with modern-day Latin American Spanish, and literature that portrayed an African dialect of Spanish stemming back to the colonial period, the literature of the Spanish Baroque that portrays *habla de negros* was intended to be a mockery of African people, and comedic in nature within the Spanish Catholic Church.



## CHAPTER 4: Prominent Composers of the *Villancico de negro*

The *villancico de negro* subgenre gained significant popularity through the 17<sup>th</sup> century until its decline towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Many composers and writers capitalized on its fame, composing hundreds of *villancicos* in sets for the liturgical calendar. Some manuscripts survived, often in the archive of the church for which they were composed, or in the archive of a library within that country. In addition to manuscripts, several texts survived from the librettists, often found in *pliegos sueltos*, or the poet's collected works. During this time, it was common to have consistent composer-librettist collaborations, as observed in the records below. This chapter highlights some of the prominent composers of *villancicos de negro* during the Spanish *Siglo de Oro* (Golden Era) between 1492 and 1659.

Mateo Flecha el Viejo, 1481–1553, Kingdom of Aragon, Catalanian Composer

Although working slightly before the Spanish Golden Era, Mateo Flecha stands out as a prominent composer of the Kingdom of Aragon (equivalent to modern day Aragon, an autonomous community in Spain). Flecha became known as “El Viejo,” to be distinguished from his nephew “El Joven,” a composer of madrigals and other genres similar to that of his uncle.<sup>55</sup> Flecha's first post is documented as director of music at the cathedral of Llída (modern day West Catalonia) from 1523 to 1525. He also served

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<sup>55</sup> Maricarmen Gómez, "Flecha, Matheo" in *Grove Music Online*. (accessed 4 Oct. 2017), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000009799>.

several other posts including six years in Guadalajara, Spain for Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (Duke of the Infantando), direction of the chapel choir of the Duke of Calabria in Valencia, as *maestro di cappella* in Sigüenza, and, at the castle of Arévalo, teacher to the daughters of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor.<sup>56</sup> Toward the end of his life, Flecha became a monk under the Cistercian Order in the Royal Abbey of Saint Maria of Pobet, where he died.

Flecha is known for his *villancicos* and *ensaladas* – a vocal piece of four to five voices that uses a mixture of languages (Spanish, Catalan, French, Italian, and Latin). *Ensaladas* are also used for entertainment of courtiers. After his death, his nephew published a volume of his uncle's music in 1581 in Prague. The majority of his works can be found in the *Cancionero de Uppsala*, with *Rú Cháu*, being one of his most recognized accredited *villancicos*.<sup>57</sup> His *La Negrina* is one of the earliest surviving *villancicos de negro*, and can be found in the *Biblioteca de Catalunya*, as well as the choral public domain web page, [http://www3.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://www3.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page).

Juan Bautista Comes 1582–1643, Spanish Composer

Born in Valencia, Juan Bautista Comes began his service as a choirboy at the Valencia Cathedral in 1594, becoming an organist and choirmaster by 1602. Bautista gained recognition holding several posts in Spain, which included a post in the Lérida Cathedral as a singer and as *maestro de capilla*, *vicemaestro de capilla* at the Real Colegio del

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

Corpus Christi, and, returning to Valencia, *maestro de capilla* at Valencia Cathedral by 1613. Three years later, he was appointed *vicemaestro* of the royal chapel, Madrid, where he was ordained as a prior. He held his final post at the Valencia Cathedral, and although in later years he was relieved of several duties, he continued to compose for the cathedral until his death.<sup>58</sup>

Bautista Comes had great success as a composer, with 215 surviving compositions.<sup>59</sup> A large portion of his compositions are choral works for two, three, or four voices, with nearly half being *villancicos*. The other compositions include masses, passion settings, and liturgical music. Of his *villancicos*, four *villancicos de negro* survived, and are housed in the Cathedral of Valencia.<sup>60</sup>

**Title:** *Vamo, Plimo, y adoremo*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Valencia

**Source location:** The Archive of the Cathedral of Valencia (Leg X-4)

**Secondary source:** Comes, Obras 2: 14-16

**Title:** *Pue lo negro en lo portale*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Valencia

**Source location:** The Archive of the Cathedral of Valencia (Leg X-4)

**Secondary source:** Comes, Obras 2: 24-35

**Title:** *Pues e la Virgen tan beya*

**Occasion:** Virgin Mary dedication

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Valencia

**Source location:** The Archive of the Cathedral of Valencia (Leg X-20)

**Secondary source:** Comes, Obras 3: 30-38

**Title:** *Tacico, vena conmigo*

**Occasion:** Part of a mass

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Valencia

**Source location:** The Archive of the Cathedral of Valencia (Leg X-43)

**Secondary source:** Comes, Obras 4: 57-64

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<sup>58</sup> Greta Olson, "Comes, Juan Bautista" in *Grove Music Online*, (accessed 24 Jul. 2017), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000006178>.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Vodovozova, 54.

Gaspar Fern ndes 1566-1629, Portuguese-Guatemalan composer

Although Portuguese born, Gaspar Fern ndes lived the majority of his professional life in New Spain. He was hired as an organist in 1599 at the cathedral of Santiago of Guatemala, eventually becoming *maestro de capilla*. Dignitaries encouraged him to take the post of *maestro de capilla* of Puebla cathedral, and he assumed the role in 1606, succeeding his friend Pedro Berm dez. He had a strong role in the cathedral, functioning as organist, choirmaster, and teacher of polyphony, but needed help and gained the assistance of Juan Guti rrez de Padilla in 1622. His health continued to deteriorate, and Padilla succeeded his post after Fern ndes death in 1629.<sup>61</sup>

As a composer, Fern ndes' focus was on liturgical music. His 1602 compilation of choirbooks is an example of both a mastery of vocal polyphony, and the usage of *habla de negros*. His choirbooks also contain works by composers Francisco Guerrero, Crist bal de Morales, and Pedro Berm dez. Once he assumed the post in Puebla, his focus shifted toward composing music in the vernacular, largely *villancicos*. His mastery of language and text is shown through his *villancicos* as he incorporates the use of *Nahuatl* (language of the indigenous Nahua people of Mexico), and the use of *habla de negros* in his *villancicos de negro*. Below is a list of surviving villancicos de negro by Gaspar Fern ndes.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Robert Stevenson, "Fernandes, Gaspar" in *Grove Music Online*, (25 Jul. 2018), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000009491>.

<sup>62</sup> Vodovozova, 61-62.

**Title:** *Dame albricia mano Anton*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Date of composition:** 1606-1629

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Puebla

**Source location:** Cathedral of Oaxaca, autograph MS of Fernánde, fols. 100v-101r

**Secondary source:** Inter-American Music Review 7.1 (Fall-Winter 1985): 3-6

**Title:** *Eso rigor e repente*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Date of composition:** 1606-1629

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Puebla

**Source location:** Cathedral of Oaxaca, autograph MS of Fernánde, fols. 234v-244r

**Secondary source:** Inter-American Music Review 7.1 (Fall-Winter 1985): 11-13

**Title:** *Tantarantan a la guerra van*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Date of composition:** 1606-1629

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Puebla

**Source location:** Cathedral of Oaxaca, autograph MS of Fernánde, fols. 263v-264

**Secondary source:** Inter-American Music Review 7.1 (Fall-Winter 1985): 18-20

**Title:** *Tururu farara con son*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Date of composition:** 1606-1629

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Puebla

**Source location:** Cathedral of Oaxaca, autograph MS of Fernánde, fols. 217v-218r

**Secondary source:** Inter-American Music Review 7.1 (Fall-Winter 1985): 23-24

Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla, 1590-1664, Spanish-Mexican Composer

Although born in Spain, Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla lived and worked a large portion of his life in Puebla, Mexico. He received his education from Francisco Vásquez who was the *maestro de capilla* at Málaga cathedral, becoming *maestro de capilla* at the collegiate church in Jerez de la Frontera. Padilla left Jerez to hold a post at Cádiz in 1615, continuing to gain merit and recognition as a leading musician. Padilla left the Iberian Peninsula and headed to New Spain, landing a job at the Puebla Cathedral as assistant maestro and cantor in 1622. At the cathedral in Puebla, Padilla's reputation only grew stronger, making the cathedral one of the top musical institutions in Latin America. He not only assisted Gaspar Fernandes, but taught polyphony, lead the choirboys ensemble, recruited and trained boy sopranos, and, after Fernandes' death, became *the maestro de capilla* in 1629.<sup>63</sup>

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Padilla also became skilled at making instruments, using African slaves to assist him. His workshop prepared dulcians, soprano dulcians, shawms, and flutes to markets within Puebla, and extended as far as Guatemala. He mentored several Mexican musicians, continued teaching polyphony and plainsong classes, and composed until passing in 1664. His assistant García de Zéspedes assumed the role of *maestro de capilla* shortly thereafter.<sup>64</sup>

Padilla composed a significant amount of choral music during his life-long post at Puebla Cathedral, where a large body of his compositions are cataloged in the archives. One of his most important surviving scores, the Puebla Choirbook no. 15, consists of a vast amount of liturgical music, which include masses, motets, psalms, responsories, and a St. Matthew Passion. In addition to Latin sacred music, Padilla composed large quantities of *villancicos*. Taking on contemporary conventions, his *villancicos* are known for including the working class and people of various ethnic backgrounds into his vernacular music, making his *villancicos de negro* extremely popular. His Ah siolo, Flasiquiyo remains a part of the Latin American repertoire. Below is a listing of surviving *villancicos de negro* by Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> John Koegel, "Padilla, Juan Gutiérrez de" in *Grove Music Online*. (accessed 25 Jul. 2017.), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000020676>.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Vodovozova, 62-63.

**Title:** *A palente, a palente*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Date of composition:** 1649

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Puebla

**Source location:** Indiana Library, Indiana University (Bloomington), W173d

**Secondary source:** Inter-American Music Review 6.1 (Fall 1984): 87

**Title:** *Al encarnado Arrebol*

**Occasion:** Immaculate Conception

**Date of composition:** 1652

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Puebla

**Source location:** Indiana Library, Indiana University (Bloomington) W173

**Secondary source:** N/A

**Title:** *Ah siolo Flasiquiyo*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Date of composition:** c. 1653

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Puebla

**Secondary source:** Robert Stevenson's Christmas Music from Baroque Mexico

**Title:** *Al Puerto de su esperanza*

**Occasion:** Immaculate Conception

**Date of composition:** 1654

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Puebla

**Source location:** Indiana Library, Indiana University (Bloomington) W173a

**Title:** *Ola plimo, ola plimo*

**Occasion:** Immaculate Conception

**Date of composition:** 1656

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Puebla

**Source location:** Indiana Library, Indiana University (Bloomington) W173b

**Title:** *Tambalagumbá*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Date of composition:** c. 1657

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Puebla

**Secondary source:** Public Domain, revised by Aurelio Tello

Joseph de Agurto y Loaysa, 1625-1695

While very little information survives on Joseph de Agurto y Loaysa, he had quite the

reputation in Mexico as a musician, and was often recognized by other prominent

composers of the time. In 1647, he worked as a singer at the Mexico City Cathedral.

Excelling as a composer in the *villancico* genre, he assumed the role *maestro de los*

*villancicos* in 1676, followed by *maestro compositor* one year later. He became *maestro*

*de capilla* in 1685. Although relinquishing his duties as *maestro de capilla* to Antonio de Salazar just three years later, he remained active in the church until his death in 1695.<sup>66</sup>

Agurto y Loaysa often collaborated on *villancicos* with Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, with several being *villancicos de negro*. In addition to *villancicos*, Agurto y Loaysa composed other sacred works including motets and liturgical works. What remains of his catalog is filed in the archives at the Cathedral of Mexico City.<sup>67</sup> The following records below are surviving texts of *villancicos de negro*, with Agurto y Loaysa as the composer.<sup>68</sup>

**Title:** *No faltó en tanta grandeza*  
**Occasion:** Assumption  
**Date of composition:** 1676  
**Performance location:** Metropolitan Church of Mexico  
**Secondary source:** Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Obras Completas, 211

**Title:** *A la voz del Sacristán*  
**Occasion:** Assumption  
**Date of composition:** 1679  
**Performance location:** Metropolitan Church of Mexico  
**Secondary source:** Obras Completas, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, 241

**Title:** *Perico con otros Negros*  
**Occasion:** Assumption  
**Date of composition:** 1677  
**Performance location:** Metropolitan Church of Mexico  
**Secondary source:** Obras Completas, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, 328

**Title:** *Acá tomo tolo*  
**Occasion:** Immaculate Conception  
**Date of composition:** 1676  
**Performance location:** Metropolitan Church of Mexico  
**Secondary source:** Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Obras Completas, 217

**Title:** *Bueno está en Latín*  
**Occasion:** Assumption  
**Date of composition:** 1685  
**Performance location:** Metropolitan Church of Mexico  
**Secondary source:** Obras Completas, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, 253-254

**Title:** *En esto entraron dos negras*  
**Occasion:** Assumption  
**Date of composition:** 1676  
**Performance location:** Metropolitan Church of Mexico  
**Secondary source:** Obras Completas, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, 362

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<sup>66</sup> Craig H. Russell, "Agurto y Loaysa [Loaysa y Agurto], Joseph [José] de" in *Grove Music Online* (6 Jul. 2018), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000041452>.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Vodovozova, 65-67.



### A Catalog of *Villancicos de negro*

Among the composers highlighted above are musicians present in Spain and New Spain throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries (with the exception of Mateo Flecha). While many of the composers are Spanish, or of Spanish descent, it is important to note that the second most musically prominent region of New Spain was Mexico. Puebla and Mexico City functioned as principal centers of music, cultivated leading composers, produced a significant amount of Spanish Baroque music and a large number of *villancicos de negro*. Both the Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral and the Puebla Cathedral currently house significant archives that have cataloged manuscripts and other findings of the Spanish Golden Era. Listed below is a list of other *villancico de negro* records throughout the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America. The list includes both *villancicos de negro* manuscripts and texts of authors that have been catalogued or reintroduced in the works of a historian or musicologist.

**Title:** *Mañana sa Corpus Christa*  
**Occasion:** Corpus Christi  
**Librettist:** Luis de Góngora  
**Date of composition:** 1609  
**Performance location:** Cathedral of Córdoba  
**Text source:** Robert Jammes, *La letrilla dialogada*, 153-155

**Title:** *¿Qué gente, Pascual, qué gente?*  
**Occasion:** Epiphany  
**Composer:** Juan Risco  
**Date of composition:** 1615  
**Performance location:** Cathedral of Córdoba  
**Text source:** Robert Jammes, *La letrilla dialogada*, 182-83

**Title:** *¡Oh que vimo, Mangalena!*  
**Occasion:** Christmas  
**Composer:** Juan Risco  
**Date of composition:** 1615  
**Performance location:** Cathedral of Córdoba  
**Text source:** Robert Jammes, *La letrilla dialogada*, 182-83

**Title:** *Aquí za mi Dios verdadero*  
**Occasion:** Christmas  
**Composer:** Luis Gargallo  
**Date of composition:** 1661  
**Performance location:** Cathedral of Huesca  
**Present location:** Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Catalog # 104.5

**Title:** *Hagamole plaça a lo Rey Mago*  
**Occasion:** Christmas  
**Composer:** Luis Gargallo  
**Date of composition:** 1661  
**Performance location:** Cathedral of Huesca  
**Present location:** Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Catalog # 104.8

**Title:** *¡Ah, Flansiquiya!*  
**Occasion:** Christmas  
**Composer:** Francisco García Montero Solano  
**Date of composition:** 1673  
**Performance location:** La Capilla Real de Granada  
**Present location:** La Capilla Real de Granada, catalog# B.G.U.G.B. 18-36(11)

**Title:** *En el portal, muy algre*  
**Occasion:** Epiphany  
**Date of composition:** 1676  
**Performance location:** El Real Convento de la Encarnación  
**Present location:** Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Catalog # 162.6

**Title:** *¿Flacico?*  
**Occasion:** Christmas  
**Date of composition:** 1679  
**Performance location:** El Real Convento de la Encarnación  
**Present location:** Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Catalog # 181.8

**Title:** *Flaciquiya ¿a donde va?*  
**Occasion:** Epiphany  
**Date of composition:** 1684  
**Performance location:** Capilla Real de Madrid  
**Present location:** Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Catalog: Varios; Mss. 9.973, fols. 183-88

**Title:** *Que te cuntale, Thomé*  
**Occasion:** Christmas  
**Composer:** Joseph Ruiz Samaniego  
**Date of composition:** 1661  
**Performance location:** La Capilla de El Pilar, Zaragoza  
**Present location:** Archive of Capitular, Zaragoza, catalog# EPA LXX-13

**Title:** *Esta noche, los negros*  
**Occasion:** Christmas  
**Librettist:** Manuel de León Marchante  
**Date of composition:** 1676  
**Present location:** Auroroa de Albornoz, Sensemayá: la poesía negra en el mundo hispanohablante, 46

**Title:** *¿Qué vamo a vé, Catalina?*  
**Occasion:** Christmas  
**Librettist:** Félix Persio Bertiso  
**Date of composition:** 1677  
**Performance location:** Sevilla, Spain  
**Present location:** Library of Samuel Pepy, No. 1545, I/13

**Title:** *Ah mi siolo Juanico*  
**Occasion:** Christmas  
**Composer:** Antonio Montoro Fernandes de Mora  
**Date of composition:** 1694  
**Performance location:** La Iglesia de San Mateo de Lucena  
**Present location:** Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Catalog # 122.8

**Title:** *Con el zon zonezito del zarabuyí*  
**Occasion:** Epiphany  
**Date of composition:** 1696  
**Performance location:** Capilla Real de Madrid  
**Present location:** Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Catalog: 295.7

**Title:** *Ah mi siolo Juanico*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Antonio Montoro Fernandes de Mora

**Date of composition:** 1694

**Performance location:** La Iglesia de San Mateo de Lucena

**Present location:** Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Catalog # 122.8

**Title:** *Aquellos negros que dieron*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Alonso de Blas y Sandoval

**Date of composition:** 1694

**Performance location:** Capilla Real de Granada

**Present location:** Capilla Real de Grenada, catalog: B.N. Barbieri R-34987, 32

**Title:** *¿Qué gente, plima, qué gente?*

**Occasion:** Epiphany

**Composer:** Alonso de Blas y Sandoval

**Date of composition:** 1699

**Performance location:** Capilla Real de Granada

**Present location:** Capilla Real de Grenada, catalog: B.G.U.G.C-38-36 (6-11)

**Title:** *Los narcisos de Guinea*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Antonio Navarro

**Date of composition:** 1717

**Performance location:** Capilla Real de Granada

**Present location:** Capilla Real de Grenada, catalog: B.G.U.G.C-38-37 (6-14)

**Title:** *Los negros vienen de zumba*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Antonio Soler

**Date of composition:** 1758

**Performance location:** San Lorenzo El Real de El Escorial

**Title:** *Azí Flaziquiya*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Alonso de Blas y Sandoval

**Date of composition:** 1701

**Performance location:** Capilla Real de Granada

**Present location:** Capilla Real de Grenada, catalog: B.G.U.G.C-38-37 (6-15)

**Title:** *Esta noche lo Neglillo*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Juan Francés de Iribarren

**Date of composition:** 1753

**Performance location:** Cathedral of Málaga

**Present location:** El Archivo Municipal de Málaga, catalog: XVIII-4-1053bis (n.p.)

**Title:** *Los negros esta noche*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Esteban Redondo

**Performance location:** Capilla Real de Granada

**Present location:** Capilla Real de Grenada, catalog: Leg 29-1094

**Title:** *Por selebrar este día*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Juan de Vaeza Saavedra

**Date of composition:** 1669

**Performance location:** Puebla, Mexico

**Present location:** Jesús Sánchez Garza Collection, Insitio Nacional de Bellas Artes de Mexico

**Title:** *Hy, hy, hy que de risa morremo*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Antonio de Salazar

**Performance location:** Puebla Cathedral

**Present location:** Jesús Sánchez Garza Collection, Insitio Nacional de Bellas Artes de Mexico

**Present location:** El Archivo de San Lorenzo El Real de El Escorial, catalog: E 122-9 (Soler); No. 15 (Rubio, *Forma*)

**Title:** *A Belén han venido*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Performance location:** Capilla Real de Granada

**Present location:** Capilla Real de Grenada, catalog: unnumbered manuscript

**Title:** *Pués y yo/ también alivanlé*

**Occasion:** Feast Day of San José

**Librettist:** Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

**Date of composition:** 1690

**Performance location:** Puebla Cathedral

**Present location:** Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Obras Completas, , 277

**Title:** *Tarara qui yo soy Anton*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Antonio de Salazar

**Date of composition:** 1678 - 1715

**Performance location:** Puebla Cathedral

**Present location:** Jesús Sánchez Garza Collection, Insitio Nacional de Bellas Artes de Mexico

**Title:** *¿Ah Siñol Andlea?*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Librettist:** Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

**Date of composition:** 1678

**Performance location:** Puebla Cathedral

**Present location:** Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Obras Completas, , 232-33

**Title:** *A los plausibles festejos*

**Occasion:** Feast Day of San Pedro Nolasco

**Librettist:** Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

**Date of composition:** 1677

**Performance location:** La Orden de N.S. de la Merced

**Present location:** Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Obras Completas, 241

**Title:** *¡Flasico, atesió!*

**Occasion:** Feast day of San Pedro

**Librettist:** Gabriel de Santillana

**Date of composition:** 1688

**Performance location:** México

**Present location:** Méndes Plancarte, *Poetas novohispanos, Segundo Siglo (1621-1721). Parte Segunda*, Poetas 134-35

**Title:** *Pués y yo/ también alivanlé*

**Occasion:** Feast Day of San José

**Librettist:** Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

**Date of composition:** 1690

**Performance location:** Puebla Cathedral

**Present location:** Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Obras Completas, , 277

**Title:** *Cucua, cucua*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Joseph de Cascante

**Date of composition:** 1723

**Performance location:** The Cathedral of Bogotá, Colombia

**Present location:** Archive of the Cathedral of Bogotá

**Title:** *Alegres a competencia*

**Occasion:** Feast Day of San José

**Librettist:** Antonio de Salazar

**Librettist:** Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

**Date of composition:** 1680

**Performance location:** Puebla Cathedral

**Title:** *Tenqué-lequé*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Julián de Contreras

**Date of composition:** 1723

**Performance location:** The Cathedral of Bogotá, Colombia

**Present location:** Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Obras Completas, 342

**Title:** *Ha negliyo, ha negliyo de Santo Thomé*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Francisco Moratilla

**Date of composition:** 1723

**Performance location:** Morelia, México

**Present location:** Archive of the Coegio de Santa Rosa de Santa María

**Title:** *¿Qué me manda benzanzé?*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Performance location:** The Cathedral of Bogotá, Colombia

**Present location:** Archive of the Cathedral of Bogotá

**Title:** *Toca la flauta*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Performance location:** The Cathedral of Bogotá, Colombia

**Present location:** Archive of the Cathedral of Bogotá

**Title:** *Vengan, vengan*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Performance location:** The Cathedral of Bogotá, Colombia

**Present location:** Archive of the Cathedral of Bogotá

**Title:** *Esa noche yo bailá*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Date of composition:** c. 1700s

**Performance location:** El Monasterio de Santa Clara, Cochabamba, Bolivia

**Present location:** Archive of El Monasterio de Santa Clara, Cochabamba, Bolivia

**Present location:** Archive of the Cathedral of Bogotá

**Title:** *Turu lu neglo*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Performance location:** The Cathedral of Bogotá, Colombia

**Present location:** Archive of the Cathedral of Bogotá

**Title:** *Los cofilades de la estleya*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Juan de Araujo

**Date of composition:** 1680-1714

**Performance location:** The Cathedral of Sucre, Bolivia

**Present location:** Archive of the Cathedral of Sucre, Bolivia

**Title:** *Pasacualillo*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Date of composition:** 1753

**Performance location:** Cusco, Perú

**Present location:** Archive of the Seminary of San Antonio Abad, Cusco, catalog: 344, Vargas Ugarte

**Title:** *Antoniya, Fraiquia, Gaspá*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Fray Felipe da Madre de Dus

**Date of composition:** 1680-1714

**Performance location:** The Cathedral of Guatemala City, Guatemala

**Present location:** Guatemala City Archivo Capitular

**Title:** *Afuella, afuella*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Rafael Antonio Castellanos

**Date of composition:** 1788

**Performance location:** The Cathedral of Guatemala City, Guatemala

**Title:** *Turu lu negro*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Performance location:** Cusco, Perú

**Present location:** Archive of the Seminary of San Antonio Abad, Cusco, catalog: 111, Vargas Ugarte

**Present location:** Guatemala City Archivo Capitular<sup>69</sup>

**Title:** *Negros de Guaranganá*

**Occasion:** Christmas

**Composer:** Rafael Antonio Castellanos

**Date of composition:** 1788

**Performance location:** The Cathedral of Guatemala City, Guatemala

**Present location:** Guatemala City Archivo Capitular

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<sup>69</sup> Vodovozova, 52-70.

## CHAPTER 5: The Unique *Villancicos de negro* of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and

Luis de Góngora y Argote

Due to Spanish colonialism, the *villancico* genre made its way to the Americas by way of cultural cross-pollination. As it did in Spain, the *villancico de negro* had a presence in New Spain, where the genre grew to encompass the perspective of authors in the Americas. Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz was an anomaly in the world of *villancico* authors and composed from a perspective that highlighted the reality of black characters within the *villancico de negro* subgenre.

### Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: The Poet

Mexican-born Juana Inés (1648 – 1695) mastered Latin and Nauhtl (an indigenous language of the Aztecs) by her early teenage years. She began teaching Latin and writing poetry in Nauhtl by age thirteen.<sup>70</sup> She became part of a Carmelite nunnery in 1667, but ultimately joined the Hieronymite nuns of New Spain in 1669 because of their undemanding living regulations. Taking devotions allowed her the flexibility to study topics of her choosing and at her own will. Sor Juana Inés was recorded as saying she desired “to have no fixed occupation which might curtail my freedom to study.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Academy of American Poets, “Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz,” Poets.org. accessed June, 2018,  
<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/sor-juana-in%C3%A9s-de-la-cruz>.

<sup>71</sup> Stephanie Merrim, “Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz,” Britannica.com, Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. 2018,  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sor-Juana-Ines-de-la-Cruz>.

A woman of the 17<sup>th</sup> century with strong interests in literature was somewhat unusual, and, although she became a nun partially to be free of such restrictions, she still faced significant adversity. Sor Juana gained quite a following for her writings; her admirers included Viceroy and Vicereine of New Spain in Mexico City, and María Luisa Manrique de Lara y Gonzaga, daughter of Vespasiano Gonzaga and ninth countess of Parades whom she also befriended.<sup>72</sup> While a large part of her following became friends and patrons, others became critics and did not agree nor support Sor Juana's contributions to literature. Some even stole her writings and used them under their own name, or the name of another writer. Bishop of Puebla, Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz published one of Sor Juana's critiques without her permission. He believed she had no business writing about secular matters and should stay in the realm of religion and prayer. The critique was written in response to a sermon by a Jesuit Portuguese preacher and published under the pseudonym Sor Filotea.<sup>73</sup> In response to such affairs, Sor Juana wrote a response to Sor Filotea, as observed in her "Reply to Sister Philotea."<sup>74</sup> In the published letter, she argued for women's rights, participation in education, and the advantage of having women involved in affairs for the country. She also defends women's rights to learn from other women, discouraging opportunities for men to assume intimate encounters with women.

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<sup>72</sup> "Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Biography," Biography.com, accessed June, 2018, <https://www.biography.com/people/sor-juana-in%C3%A9s-de-la-cruz-38178>.

<sup>73</sup> Stuart Murray, *Library: An Illustrated History*, (New York: Skyhorse, 2009), 139.

<sup>74</sup> "Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz," Proyecto Ensayo Hispanico, accessed June, 2018, <https://www.ensayistas.org/antologia/XVII/sorjuana/sorjuana1.htm>.



Education, women's rights and her significant contribution to literature, as seen in *The Dream*, are all monumental credits that made Sor Juana truly exceptional, especially in a 17<sup>th</sup>-century male-governed environment. Her contribution to the *villancico* genre, although minimal, is equally significant, as are her other writings.

#### *Villancicos de negro* of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

As stated, 17<sup>th</sup>-century New Spain functioned in a social order that used slavery as the foundation. Slaves in New Spain were both indigenous to American lands, and of African descent, brought over during the colonial period. The *villancicos de negro* of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz reflected the lifestyle of slaves and depicted them in a more realistic perspective than the image painted in other popular *villancicos* in circulation during that time. Frequently circulating *villancicos* reflected slaves functioning in society in one of two ways: contributing bottom-class workers of society or participating members of the church.<sup>75</sup> While the first may be somewhat true to the way slaves functioned in society, the idea that slaves were willing, participating members of society is far-fetched. Slaves were seen as subhuman, congruent to those that celebrated paganism, or similar to beings without any concept of civilization.<sup>76</sup> In her compositions, Sor Juana wrote in a way that was not obviously offensive to the church, but did expose the conditions of slavery.

One could classify Sor Juana's *villancicos de negro* in two categories: Class A *villancicos* are those that expose the living conditions and inequality of African slaves,

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<sup>75</sup> Baltasar Fra Molinero, "Los villancicos negros de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz," *Chiricú* 5, no. 2 (1988): 20.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

and their protest to such conditions. Class B *villancicos* are comedic and/or light in nature and present African slaves in a manner similar to other Spanish comedic writers such as Lope de Rueda, Lope de Vega, and Luis Quiñones de Benavente.<sup>77</sup>

#### *Villancicos de negro* by Class

The first class of *villancicos de negro* presents three scenarios in the daily life of African slaves in New Spain: (1) institutional slavery, (2) laborious work conditions, and (3) racial discrimination. In all three scenarios of Class A, the characters in these *villancicos* are portrayed as content in their plight, being believers in Christ and Spanish Christian doctrine. Sor Juana closes her Class A *villancicos de negro* with a profession of faith, solidifying the idea of equality in which, “We are all the same before God...ultimate freedom is only achieved in heaven.”<sup>78</sup>

The protagonists of Sor Juana’s *villancicos de negro* are of both sexes. This is not true for most other *villancicos*, which are almost always male. Female protagonists usually function in a specific way, speaking of the beauty and glorification of the Virgin Mary, and, at times, comparing themselves to her. As seen in *Villancico* 58 of Class A, the introduction illustrates women with dark skin singing in a Matins service.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 21.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 21.

Spanish	English translation
<i>Los azabaches con alma</i>	The (jet) black things with soul
<i>su cantico comenzaron</i>	their song began
<i>y novedad fue en Maitines</i>	and novelty was in Matins
<i>ver las Tinieblas cantando</i>	to see the Dark girls singing <sup>79 80</sup>

First, the dark women are addressed as inanimate objects with souls (*azabaches con alma*). They are then addressed as the tinted/dark ones that sing (*Tinieblas cantando*). Yet, the following *copla* compares the black singing women to the beauty of the Virgin Mary, who also has dark skin.

(Sor Juana Villancico 58, continued).

Habla de negros	Spanish	English translation
<i>Flacica, turu la Negla</i>	<i>Flacica, todo la Negla</i>	Flacica, all of us are Black
<i>Hoy de guto bailalá</i>	<i>Hoy te gusto bailarla</i>	Today I like to dance
<i>Polque una Nenglita beya</i>	<i>Porque una Negrita bella</i>	Because she is a beautiful black
<i>E Cielo va gobelná</i>	<i>Y Cielo va goberná</i>	girl (who) goes to govern the sky

Although her name is not offered, the woman who governs the sky is none other than the Virgin Mary. Sor Juana's characters celebrate the Virgin Mary with a dance because she

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<sup>79</sup> All *villancicos de negro* of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz are numbered according to her collected works as observed in: Alfonso Méndez Plancarte, ed., *Las Obras Completas de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, II, Villancicos y Letras Sacras*, (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994).

<sup>80</sup> Translation by author for all passages in this chapter.

Mary, too, is a beautiful black woman. The admiration of dark beauty, the Virgin Mary being both a black woman and worshipped by black women, was an implausible concept in the Christian Spanish-speaking world. Still, it is important to note that Sor Juana resorts to the *habla de negros* to signify the lack of education, while the description of “inanimate objects with souls” depicts African female characters as subhuman.

The conclusion is as expected. The protagonist finds solace in slavery and asks to gain freedom in the next life where the Virgin Mary dwells, because there is more joy in the next life than the present one.

(Sor Juana *Villancico* 58, continued).

<i>E me envialá la alegría</i>	<i>Y me eviala la alegría</i>	And send me her joy
<i>Pue que mucho tendla ayá</i>	<i>Porque mucho tendrá allá</i>	Because she has much there
<i>Pala que con ese ayula</i>	<i>Para que con ese ayuda</i>	So with that help
<i>ganemu su libeltá</i>	<i>ganemos su libertad</i>	We will gain freedom

In the following *villancico*, written in honor of the Feast of the Conception, Sor Juana valorizes sun-kissed women and the beauty of blackness, portrayed by women of color.

Sor Juana Villancico for the Feast of the Conception<sup>81</sup>

Spanish	English translation
<i>-Morenica la Esposa está!</i>	-A Dark one is the Wife!
<i>Del Sol, que siempre la baña,</i>	From the Sun, that always bathes her,
<i>Está abrasada la Esposa;</i>	The Wife is burned;
<i>Y tanto está más Hermosa</i>	And so is more beautiful
<i>Cuanto más de ... le se acompaña:</i>	The more he accompanies her:
<i>Nunca su Pureza empaña,</i>	Never tarnishes her Purity,
<i>Porque nuna el Sol se va ...</i>	Because the Sun never goes away...
<i>-Morenica la Esposa está!</i>	-A dark one is the Wife!
<i>Negra se confiesa; pero</i>	Black she confesses herself; but
<i>Dice que esa negregura [sic]</i>	Says that that blackness
<i>Le da mayor hermosura</i>	Gives her great beauty...

Here again, the Virgin Mary is seen as a black woman who receives her gift of color from the sun. Mary is in fact more beautiful because of her darker skin.<sup>82</sup> Unique to this villancico, the 'Sun' plays a significant character, as it is deified, possibly symbolizing

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<sup>81</sup> Natalie Underberg, "Sor Juana's Villancicos: Context, Gender, and Genre," *Western Folklore* 60, no. 4 (2001): 306.

<sup>82</sup> Baltasar Fra Moliner. 24.

God. The word ‘Sol’ is not only capitalized, but also personified and referred to as ‘He’.

It accompanies the woman, bathes her, never leaves her, and makes her more beautiful.

In a time when dark skin was demonized, this *villancico* adds positive value to the idea of blackness, while aligning people of color with non-European figures in Christianity.

Thematically, the men are given more flexibility and address a number of social issues in Sor Juana’s *villancicos*. In her Class A *Villancico* 232, there is dialogue between a Spaniard and an African character, as well as resistance from the African character.

Sor Juana *Villancico* 232

<b>Habla de negros</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>English translation</b>
<i>Quien es? Un Negliyo</i>	<i>Quien es? Un Negrito</i>	Who are you? A Black man
<i>Vaya, Vaya fuera,</i>	<i>Vaya, Vaya afuera</i>	Go, go outside,
<i>que en fiesta de luces,</i>	<i>que en fiesta de luces</i>	You are in a party of light
<i>toda de purezas</i>	<i>Toda de purezas</i>	Of all purities
<i>no es bien se permita</i>	<i>No es bien se permite</i>	It is not well allowed
<i>haya cosa negra</i>	<i>haya cosa negra</i>	To have a black thing

The African character responds to being called “*cosa negra*” (black thing), but makes a surprising claim in his response.

(Sor Juana *Villancico* 232, continued).

<i>Aunque Negro, blanco somo,</i>	<i>Aunque Negro, blanco somos</i>	Although black, we are white
<i>lela, lela</i>	<i>Lela, lela</i>	Lela, lela
<i>Blanca sa, no prieta</i>	<i>Blanco soy, no prieta</i>	White I am, not brown

In his declaration, not only does he challenge the white Spaniard, but the African character states that although he is black, he is also white. There appears a play on words, in which an association with whiteness is to be closer to God, and to be brown or black is a representation of impurity, perhaps evil.<sup>83</sup> What then follows is (apparently) a Yoruba folk song of the African slave, speaking of *la Mujer del Apocalipsis* (Woman of the Apocalypse), which is an iconographical representation of the Virgin Mary.<sup>84</sup> The Woman of the Apocalypse is also full of light and is the Queen in heaven.<sup>85</sup>

The *villancicos de negro* that feature male African characters are of both *villancico* class types, and explore emotion that makes the characters appear less subhuman (like an inanimate object, perhaps). This is evident in Sor Juana's Class B *Villancico* 224.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Baltasar Fra Moliner. 25.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 25.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. 25.

<sup>86</sup> Ángel M. Aguirre, "Elementos afronegroides en dos Poemas de Luis de Góngora y Argote y en cinco villancicos de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz," (Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico), 12, [https://cvc.cervantes.es/literatura/aispi/pdf/07/07\\_293.pdf](https://cvc.cervantes.es/literatura/aispi/pdf/07/07_293.pdf).

<b>Habla de negros</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>English translation</b>
<i>1. Cantemo, Pilico que se va las Reina, y dalemu turo una noche buena.</i>	<i>1. Cantemos Pirico que se va la Reina, y daremos todo una noche Buena.</i>	1. We Sing, Pirico the Queen leaves, and we give all a good night.
<i>2. Iguale volale, Flacico, de pena, que nos déjà ascula a turo las Negla.</i>	<i>2. Iguale, llorale Flacico de pena, que nos déjà oscura a todo las Negras</i>	2. I'll cry the same Flacico, of grief, leaving us dark all the Black ones
<i>1. Si las Cielo va y Dioso la lleva, ¿pala qué yola, si Eya sa cuntenta?</i>	<i>1. Si las Cielo va y Dioso la lleva ¿Para qué llora, si Ella esta contenta?</i>	1. If the Heavens go and God leads, For what (why) weep if she is happy?
...	...	...
<i>2. Déjame yola, Flacico, poi Eya, que se va, y nosotlo la Oblaje nos deja.</i>	<i>2. Déjame llorar, Flacico, por Ella, que se va, y nosotros la obraje nos deja.</i>	2. Let me cry, Flacico, for Her, She leaves, we (have) work, let us.

Here in the first three verses, two African male figures experience sadness. Flacico communicates in song to Pirico about being left behind by the Virgin Mary (the Queen). They are stricken with grief and begin to cry because they feel isolated as the “Black ones” and are left in the dark. While they are not sure the reason for the plight, they question their sorrow and believe there is no cause for crying if the Virgin Mary is happy. After being asked why he is weeping, Pirico references getting back to work in *La Obraje*



– a term used for textile mills between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in colonial New Spain.<sup>87</sup>

The *estribillo* addresses social conflict in a manner that is another play on words.

(Sor Juana Villancico 224, continued).

<i>que la Reina se nos va!</i>	<i>Que la Reina se nos va!</i>	The Queen is leaving us!
<i>¡Uh, uh, uh,</i>	<i>¡Uh, uh, uh,</i>	¡Uh, uh, uh
<i>que non blanca como tú,</i>	<i>que non Blanca como tú</i>	that she is not white like you
<i>nin Paño que no sa buena,</i>	<i>Ni españoles que no sea</i>	Nor Spaniards that are not
<i>que</i>	<i>bueno</i>	good
<i>Eya dici: So molena...</i>	<i>Que Ella dice: Soy morena...</i>	She says: I am brown ...

Here, Sor Juana speaks from the Virgin Mary's perspective, declaring that she is not white, but brown, and that the Spaniards are not good. The Virgin Mary does not want to physically look like the bad people (white Spaniards). Ironically, the African characters physically represent beings closer to God than White Spaniards.<sup>88</sup> In his article *Los villancicos negros de Dor Juana Inés de la Cruz*, Baltasar Fra Moliner examines this specific *villancico* and writes:

The rejection of the Spanish acquires more force because it is said in the "language of blacks," the traditional instrument of the inconsequential messages

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<sup>87</sup> Richard E. Greenleaf, "The Obraje in the Late Mexican Colony," *The Americas* 23, no. 3 (1967): 227.

<sup>88</sup> Baltasar Fra Moliner. 24.

of Spanish comedy. Now the message is important and the linguistic method is still that of comedy, with which irony is produced.<sup>89</sup>

A series of pertinent issues are addressed here. In addition to experiencing sorrow, an emotion outside of the typical juvenile bliss and comedy of other circulating *villancicos*, Sor Juana allows African characters to experience grief from feeling alone, and has them address themselves as the “Black ones.” (To Moliner’s point, the pronunciation here is incorrect; *Las Negras* should be *Los Negros*, demonstrating another example in which the characters of these *villancicos* use interchangeable gender pronouns). In the third verse, she also allows the characters to question their emotion and consider if crying is within reason (“Why weep if she is happy?”). Lastly, Sor Juana allows the characters to mention their work place. In 17<sup>th</sup>-century colonial New Spain, common places for slaves to work included textile mills. The characters abandon the idea of feeling sorrow, only to get back to the task at hand, working in *la obraje*.

In her *villancicos*, Sor Juana advances emotional depth, explores sensitivity to race and gender and introduces realism through a setting similar to work environments of African slaves in New Spain. A woman addressing topics such as these in 17<sup>th</sup>-century New Spain is both risky and incredible. It is possible that Sor Juana wrote her *villancicos* with a different iconographical figure to represent Black and indigenous people in New Spain, as well as giving a voice to those that were oppressed because she believed they were not as barbarous and uncivilized as her European counterparts. Black and indigenous people

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 24.

were equally human, and deserved to have deified figures resemble them in the manner of the Europeans. Still, Sor Juana did conform to some norms of the time within the genre. She continues the use of *habla de negros*, promoting the concept of a slave being equated to an uneducated, childlike figure.

#### Luis de Góngora y Argote

Sor Juana was one of several poets writing the *villancico de negro* genre whose texts were recycled by various composers. Another example of such a writer, and one of the most prominent of the genre, was Luis de Góngora who, writing just a few years prior to Sor Juana, produced some of the oldest surviving *villancicos* of the Iberian Peninsula.

Luis de Góngora y Argote (1561 – 1627) was born into a family of wealth. His father was a judge and owned an exceptional library from which Góngora drew a great deal of inspiration. He studied at the University of Salamanca and by 1605 was ordained as a priest. In his travels, Góngora visited several cities in Spain – including Madrid, Salamanca, Madrid, Granada, and Toledo – promoting his work. It is through his travels that he gained significant recognition due to his writings, creating relationships with patrons and by 1617 he gained an honorary appointment as chaplain to King Phillip III of Spain.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> “Luis de Góngora,” Britannica.com, Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Luis-de-Gongora>.

### Writing Style and *Villancicos de negro* of Luis de Góngora y Argote

Góngora was known for his satirical verse and unhappy sentiments in his writings. He developed his own style of writing, *Gongorismo*, an intentionally complex and elaborate style that includes Latinisms, mythological allusions, and descriptive imagery that can make understanding the text somewhat difficult.<sup>91</sup> *Gongorismo* became a movement practiced by several contemporary writers even after his death; it later grew to a larger movement called *Culteranismo*. This stylistic movement was highly popularized in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish Baroque; it used a significant amount of complex metaphors, as well as complex syntactical order. Still, Góngora achieved most of his fame through smaller sonnets, *letrillas* and *villancicos*. While Góngora is credited for helping popularize the *villancico* genre in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, his contribution to the genre was not as significant as those of Sor Juana. Yet, uniquely, they incorporate a mix of languages, including *habla de negros* and *lingua de pretos* (language of the blacks in Portuguese). *Villancicos* that include a mixture of languages and/or dialects are often referred to as *ensaladas*, *esaladillas*, *mezclas*, and *criollos*. As observed in the following Christmas-themed *villancico* entitled “*Al Nacimiento de Cristo Nuestro Señor*,” both pseudo-African dialects of Castilian and Portuguese are used between two African characters who are excited to play instruments and sing in Bethlehem.

<b>Habla de negros</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>English translation</b>
<i>¡Oh qué vimo, Mangalena!</i>	<i>¡Oh qué vimos Magdalena!</i>	What did we see Magdalena!
<i>¡Oh qué vimo!</i>	<i>¡Oh qué vimos!</i>	Oh what did we see!
<i>¿Donde, primo?</i>	<i>¿Donde, primo?</i>	Where, cousin?

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<i>No portalo de Belena</i>	<i>No portalo de Belena</i>	Do not carry it from Bethlehem
<i>E que fu?</i>	<i>E que fue (Portuguese)</i>	And what was it?
<i>Entre la hena...</i>	<i>Entre la ajena</i>	Between the unforbidden
<i>Caya caya!</i>	<i>Caía caía!</i>	Fall fall!
<i>Por en Diosa que no miento.</i>	<i>Por en Diosa que no miento.</i>	By God I do not lie
<i>Vamo ayá.</i>	<i>Vamos ayá.</i>	Let us go there.
<i>Toca instrumento...</i>	<i>Toca (los) instrumentos...</i>	Play instruments...
<i>Cantando con melonía</i>	<i>Cantando con melodía</i>	Singing with melody
<i>A un niño que e diosa e reya;</i>	<i>A un niño que en dios y Rey;</i>	To a child that is of God as King;
<i>me tan desnuda que un bueya</i>	<i>me tan desnudo que en bella</i>	My bare beauty
<i>le esta contino bahando.</i>	<i>la esta continua bajando.</i>	continues to descend.

Under the classification of Sor Juana's *villancicos*, this would be considered Class B.

This Christmas *villancico* uses two African slaves who address each other as cousin and capitalize on playing and singing music for the adoration of baby Jesus. The lack of education is further emphasized by the use of *habla de negros* intertwined with *lingua de pretos*, as the slaves are not able to decipher/acknowledge the difference between languages. Interestingly enough, God is also mistakenly addressed as goddess (Diosa), something not observed in other *villancicos*. The last line of this excerpt is an example of *Gongorismo*. The text states “*A un niño que en dios y Rey; me tan desnudo que en bella la esta continua bajando*” (literal translation: To a child that in God is King; me so naked that in beauty the is continue falling). The syntactical order is obscure and noticeably difficult to comprehend through the first read. The explanation of the text is that baby

Jesus (the child) in pure naked beauty continues to descend (upon those living on earth) as observed in the English translation above.

*Gongorismo* existed at the same time of *conceptismo*, a contrasting literary movement popularized by Francisco de Quevedo. *Conceptismo* valued conceptual details, simple vocabulary, witty metaphors, concise structure over elaborate ideas, obscure syntax, and complex vocabulary and metaphors, as in *Gongorismo*.<sup>92</sup> Góngora and Quevedo were known to have a feud with one another and often criticized each other's writings.

Although the majority of Góngora's works were not published, many, including *villancicos*, can be found in circulating *cancioneros* and anthologies of the time. He did make an attempt to publish his own works in 1623 but was unsuccessful.<sup>93</sup> The tricentennial of his death was celebrated by a collective of Spanish poets called Generation 27' (taking the name from the trecentary of Góngora's death – 1927). These poets pioneered a revival of Góngora's works through recitals and literary events from 1923 – 1927, with an end goal of compiling a critical edition of his work.<sup>94</sup> This movement was also observed as one of the first revivals of Spanish Baroque literature, where Góngora served as a principal figure.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Germán Bleiberg, *Dictionary of the Literature of the Iberian Peninsula*, (Greenwood Press, 1993), 425.

<sup>93</sup> Luis de Góngora," Newworldencyclopedia.org, accessed July, 2018, [http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Luis\\_de\\_Gongora](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Luis_de_Gongora).

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 6: Historically Informed Performance

### Historically Informed Performance (HIP)

In contemporary performance of Baroque music, performers interested in replicating the style of the original must make decisions based on musicological research and methods they believe are congruent with 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century practices. Being that there are no recordings from the time of the Baroque, many decisions of historically informed performance rely heavily on the findings of documents such as treatises, scores, and other artifacts that convey an idea of performance practice regarding style, technique, mannerisms, and orchestration. As there are multiple approaches to historically informed performance, it is valuable to explore the avenues of how musicologists and performers have arrived at a standardized practice of early Western music. We will then observe how those methods affect modern performances of the *villancico de negro* subgenre.

Performing music of earlier centuries has consistently been exercised in the realm of Western art. It has always been a way for composers to pay homage to the generation before, most often their teachers. It was also a way for performers to show mastery of a genre, technique, and skill. In 18<sup>th</sup>-century England, for example, Johann Christoph Pepusch formed an Academy of Early Music in the 1720s; a school modeled after the 16<sup>th</sup>-century vocal polyphonic styles of Palestrina, Byrd and Morley, writing almost two centuries earlier.<sup>96</sup> Gottfried van Swieten, who knew several prominent musicians

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<sup>96</sup> Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History*, (Thames & Hudson. 1988).

including Mozart and Handel, would offer home concerts of “ancient” music.<sup>97</sup> Haydn and Mozart both proved their appreciation for the previous generation in their own music, often paying homage through counterpoint in the style of Bach and Handel. Even after the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the early Romantic period saw a continued revival of Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque genres. In fact, the revival of early music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century became a fad that never truly faded, contributing to what is acknowledged as museum culture.

### Museum Culture

The turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of cultural idolization, which became a European artistic movement. Napoleon expanded the Louvre in Paris. Many other renowned European museums were constructed, which include the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, Netherlands in 1800; the Prado Museum in Madrid, Spain in 1819; the National Gallery in London, England in 1824; and Das Alte Museum in Berlin, Germany in 1830.<sup>98</sup> The idea of paying homage and celebrating the forbearers of pre-19<sup>th</sup>-century art was not unique to the Romantic period, but composers did begin to acknowledge a strong sense of heirship and tradition more so than any of the former periods.<sup>99</sup> Leading up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, composers felt an obligation to continue the works, and adhere to the fads of Classical and Baroque giants.

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.15.

<sup>98</sup> Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, (Oxford University Press, 2013), 468.

<sup>99</sup> Taruskin, 467.



### As an Artistic Movement

Just as paintings were marveled in museums, masterworks of the greats were resurrected and performed in concert halls. Concerts were no longer just an event for aristocracy and royalty, but became a public experience. In that regard, musicians composed and promoted their own works, but performed a catalog of music of the Classical and Baroque greats. Mendelssohn, for example, was greatly influenced by Bach and Handel. In 1829, at age twenty, he revived Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in Berlin, the first to perform the work since Bach's death in 1750.<sup>100</sup> Mendelssohn also championed other genres of the Baroque masters he admired so much. His oratorios *Elijah* and *Paulus* employ Handelian techniques, as well as the use of turba choruses and Lutheran chorales in Bach fashion.

Later Romantic composers continued to revive works and genres of other masters. The Cecilian movement prompted a resurgence of early Catholic Church music, and sought to bring back the importance of intelligibility of words and music over individual artistry. Taking its name from the mystical patron St. Cecilia, the movement aimed to promote Gregorian chant, 16<sup>th</sup>-century polyphony, organ music and communal hymn signing.<sup>101</sup> As a result, choral music saw a resurgence of Renaissance and Medieval stylistic practices, as can be observed in the compositions of Bruckner, Liszt, and Rheinberger.

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<sup>100</sup> Taruskin, 601.

<sup>101</sup> Siegfried Gmeinwieser, "Cecilian Movement," *Grove Music Online*, 9 Feb. 2019, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000005245>.

Nineteenth-century museum culture revived many works of early great composers. Yet, as stated previously, concertizing music of earlier periods was not a unique trend for Romantic musicians. Prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, musicians did perform music of their predecessors, but did not aim to replicate music according to original practices.<sup>102</sup> The idea of historically informed performance, however, began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Components of HIP

Nineteenth-century museum culture saw a revival of older works largely subjected to contemporaneous performance practice. Musicological studies and discoveries have greatly advanced our knowledge of earlier performance practice, leading to the Historically Informed Performance (HIP) movement. Historians and HIP performers today aim to reproduce sounds and styles as the composer intended; their decisions are largely based on the use of instruments, tuning, and the nature of singing.

The study of original instruments and the sounds they produce are critical to HIP, as instrument families have evolved and changed over time; modern instruments look and sound quite different than their ancestral equivalents. Baroque instruments were designed to be performed in intimate settings like churches and courts, and therefore were constructed in a light and flexible manner, held in varying postures, and played in a more delicate fashion.<sup>103</sup> For example, stringed instruments would use gut strings that produce

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<sup>102</sup> Todd. M. McComb, “What is Early Music?” July, 1999,  
<http://www.medieval.org/emfaq/misc/whatis.htm>.

<sup>103</sup> Marika Fischer Hoyt, “Historically-Informed Performance: Why HIP is so hip,” Wisconsin Public Radio.org, July, 2013,  
<https://www.wpr.org/historically-informed-performance-why-hip-so-hip>.

a warm, rich, and colorful tone quality instead of the modern steel ones. Upper strings would rest on the player's collarbone instead of a modern chinrest or shoulder rest. Gamba players rested their instruments between their calves and did not use the modern endpin for balance. Bows for stringed instruments curved in a convex shape and produced a softer sound at the tip of the bow, as opposed to the modern concave form.<sup>104</sup> Other instrument families have evolved in similar manners. The flute was constructed from wood not metal (like its modern equivalent) and had only two keys. The horn and trumpet did not have valves. The trombone replaced the sackbut, bassoon replaced the dulcian, and the harpsichord, clavichord, and pianoforte were replaced by the modern piano.

Tuning is another contributor to consider in replicating pre-19<sup>th</sup>-century performances. Modern-day performers recognize standard concert pitch as A above middle C at a frequency of 440 Hz (hertz).<sup>105</sup> While this remains true as the international standard, pre-Romantic tuning was not as standardized and varied according to region. Invented in 1711 by trumpeter and lutenist John Shore, the tuning fork served, and currently still serves as an acoustic pitch resonator. In fact, in the 1800s, this device held different pitch frequencies varying on decade and region. For example, a tuning fork believed to be associated with Handel dating back to 1740 is pitched at 422.5 Hz, while another is pitched a quartertone lower at 409 Hz just forty years later.<sup>106</sup> Currently in the British

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Bruce Haynes, *History of Performing Pitch: The Story of "A,"* (Scarecrow Press, 2013), ISBN 978-0-8108-4185-7.

<sup>106</sup> Brian Blood, *Music theory online: pitch, temperament & timbre*. May 2018, <https://www.dolmetsch.com/musictheory27.htm>.

Library, a tuning fork belonging to Beethoven during the year 1800 is pitched at 455.5 Hz, over a half tone higher than today's standard.<sup>107</sup> The notion that tuning was not standardized and had many variances according to time and region only makes the concepts of HIP more challenging. These wide variations in tuning further complicate the job of the modern performer.

Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the manner of singing is presumed to be quite different from modern singing as well. No models or recordings exist, leaving historically informed singing disputable. Our concept of pre-19<sup>th</sup>-century singing has largely been based on research, scholarship, and academic debate, with a primary focus on the use of vibrato. Many musicologists in favor of HIP believe that singing is most accurate and true when sung straight, that is, without the use of vibrancy. Advocates believe straight-tone singing makes the sound pure and lean.<sup>108</sup>

Style is unique to each period of Western art music and is descriptive of the manner in which music was performed. Instruments have been resurrected and replicated, and performance traditions, to some degree, have been revived. Yet, style demystifies the “how” in performing music of earlier periods. Performance mannerisms remain speculative: how appoggiaturas were approached, if violinists held their bows higher than modern times (as Leopold Mozart describes), if tempi were indeed on the swift side

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<sup>107</sup> "Beethoven's tuning fork," British Library, March 2017, <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/beethovens-tuning-fork>.

<sup>108</sup> Judith Malafronte, “*Vibrato Wars*,” *Early Music America*, 2015, 30. <https://www.earlymusicamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/VibratoWars-1.pdf>.

knowing that dance was the foundation for a large gamut of Baroque music, and how performance conventions were enacted. Today, performers of early music are still subject to some contemporary performance practices and conditions that may affect the accuracy of an HIP; they may include venue, performing forces, and a performer's preference or choice to use specified conventions of the time. These factors contribute to historically-informed performances that are nevertheless an incongruous reflection of music performed before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

All of the aforementioned factors are vital in replicating a Baroque HIP. However, considering texted music representative of the time, such as the *villancico de negro*, presents other complications in an HIP. In the *villancico de negro*, an HIP would call for the use of *habla de negros*, white characters pretending to be black caricatures, and music that mimics an idea of African culture. Is it possible to modernize an HIP of vocal colonial music such as the *villancico de negro*? In order to form a decision, there are crucial factors, in addition to what we know regarding instrumental and vocal practices, to consider in the performance practice of the *villancico de negro*.

#### HIP of the *Villancico de negro*

In considering an HIP of the *villancico de negro*, the use of characters is a pivotal element to consider in a post-colonial, modern performance setting. Due to the genre's use of characters, knowing who performed this music is important. We have seen that the *villancico de negro* is a paraliturgical genre of music designed for comedic relief,

depicting scenarios of African figures encountering life, as seen through a European lens. We also know that Europeans dominated Africans, as well as people of indigenous lands through servitude during the same time the *villancico de negro* was at its highest popularity in the Spanish-speaking world. This European dominance allows Europeans to be the voice of those that they enslaved, purely from a European perspective. In this case, Europeans portray an image of Africanness.<sup>109</sup> As a result, and as observed in the *villancico de negro*, Africans usually have limited interest in music and dance, and emotionally limited experience joy, regardless of their circumstance.

#### Text

A large component unique to the *villancico de negro* is the use of *habla de negros*. The use of such text was designed to mock African people for comedic relief. The use of this text would be demeaning and insulting. If the *habla de negros* was removed, and the text was updated, we would fundamentally change the piece, remove what Spaniards found humorous and falsely present the image that Spanish composers portrayed. Resultantly, the use of *habla de negros* in a contemporary setting is offensive and without the use of *habla de negros*, a historically-informed performance would be inaccurate because of the music's original context.

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<sup>109</sup> Geoff Baker, "Latin American Baroque: Performance as a Post-Colonial Act?" *Early Music*, 36, 3 (August 2008): 442.

## Context

To further understand the *villancico de negro* in a colonial context, knowing who performed this music in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries is key. Musicologist Geoff Baker mentions that in the cathedrals where the majority of this music was performed, no black musicians were present, as performing and singing in church was executed by the upper (European) classes. He states, “These pieces were almost always sung by white musicians, members of the middle or upper strata of colonial society...The *negrilla* minimized real encounter by substituting it with a fake one. This was the blackface minstrelsy of its time.”<sup>110</sup> When performed during colonial times, the *villancico de negro* subgenre was the exhibition of white musicians imitating black musicians to a white audience.<sup>111</sup>

If a performer chose to give the *villancico de negro* a historically informed performance, then he/she must also make the choice to disassociate the music for aesthetic purposes, completely separate from a brutal colonial and racist history. Also, in doing this, the idea of historically informed performance becomes somewhat foreign. Removing historical context away from the genre also removes its liturgical function, as it was designed to mock African and indigenous people. In discussing colonial music of the Latin Baroque, Baker bluntly states, “A historically correct performance would be a racist performance.”<sup>112</sup> In separating the music from its history for aesthetic purposes, the performer assumes that the audience should remain historically uninformed.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. 443.

Performing the *villancico de negro* for aesthetic purposes absent of historical context also suggests that the subgenre is influenced by or celebrates African culture. However, we have already concluded that the *villancico de negro* largely ignores African culture. The relationship between Spaniards and Africans suggested by the *villancico de negro* is not congruent with the actual culture of colonial Latin America.<sup>113</sup>

#### Reinventing Performance of the *Villancico de negro*

While it has been proven that the *villancico de negro* imitates African culture through a European lens, some believe that African influence on Spanish music occurred on a larger scale. North Africans did have a presence on the Iberian Peninsula, and it is suggested that Africa influenced Spanish music in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.<sup>114</sup> While this is speculative and not proven, this notion would assume that there exists African influence on the gamut of the *villancico* repertory and not just the ones categorized as *negros/negrillos*.

Another avenue of the modern performer may be to reinvent the music to fit a narrative that promotes an authentic representation of African features. This route allows the performer to deemphasize the way the work would have originally sounded and highlight features that valorizes African culture. Reinventing a genre to be celebratory of a culture is indeed a way to promote authentic music in a positive manner. In this regard, African

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid. 444.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid. 444



and indigenous people are not caricatured as was originally intended by composers of the time, however, this avenue may still produce a performance that is a-historical and blind of the original context.

## Conclusion

Historically-informed performance is a movement guided by both music historians and performers with aims to recreate sound and style as they were first heard in its respective time. Historians and performers reach decisions of sound-making and style through treatises, the types of instruments played, tuning, style of singing, and conventions of the respective time period. Historical context of music and the music's intended function are equally important, particularly with texted music, as observed in the *villancico de negro* subgenre. An HIP performance of the *villancico de negro* challenges the modern performer because it celebrates the history of colonialism, promotes pseudo-African musical features, and praises caricatures of African and indigenous people. Even with aims to separate the music from the context of colonialism for aesthetic purposes, the concept of an HIP becomes flawed because of its intended liturgical function. The *villancico de negro* was designed to use images, imitate sounds, and use pseudo-texts of indigenous and African people as a form of comedic relief. Still, the modern performer of *villancicos de negro* found some success in reinventing the subgenre to promote authentic African musical features. Using this avenue, allows a perspective where African characters are speaking and have a voice, rather than being spoken for through a European lens that is reflective of a colonial past.

## CHAPTER 7: Contemporary Contributors of the *Villancico de negro* genre

The *villancico de negro* lives through performance in Spain and Latin America.

Occasionally, the subgenre is performed by choral groups around the world where Spanish is not the primary or official language. In addition to being performed during the Christmas season, *villancicos de negro* are often performed throughout the rest of the year to diversify concert programs as an example of Latin Baroque or multicultural music with African influence. Depending on the ensemble, and its knowledge of the genre, *villancicos de negro* are presented in a multitude of ways. While some may appear to celebrate African culture, others adhere more to contemporary conventions and styles.

For those who live in Spain and Latin America attending a concert with *villancicos de negro* on the program is seemingly normal and has been for centuries. However, in countries in the Global North like the United States, *villancicos de negro* are not standardized choral concert literature. Therefore, the subgenre is often programmed to represent a specific feature in western art music, e.g. multiculturalism, Christmastide, features of Latin Baroque, etc. Still, for countries in the Global North, where there is a history of minstrelsy, segregation, slavery, violence and exoticism, it is not advisable to revive these due to the resonances as listed above.

In an effort to monitor contemporary performance, and the variances of the *villancico de negro* that exist today, this chapter gives a brief overview of ensembles that perform

*villancicos de negro* as an essential part of their repertoire within the past 50 years and how they justify their means of performance.

Jordi Savall and Hespèrion XX/XXI, Spain

In Spain, Catalan musician Jordi Savall (i Bernadet) is a pivotal figure that brings a focus to early music written before 1800. He continues to have a huge impact on performance practice and is a primary model of performing *villancicos de negro*.

Savall received his education in his homeland, Catalonia, studying at the Barcelona Conservatory of Music in 1964. As a child, Savall studied cello, and later learned viola da gamba and early music, playing with Ars Musicae de Barcelona, and completed advanced studies in Switzerland at Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in 1968. Savall succeeded his mentor August Wenzinger as professor of viola da gamba, and founded the first of his music ensembles, Hespèrion XX (now known as Hespèrion XXI since the year 2000), alongside his wife Montserrat Figueras (now deceased).<sup>115</sup>

Savall has played a significant role in popularizing viola da gamba through performance, as well as literature of the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque periods. While he performs classical, romantic, and contemporary repertoire, he is most famous for performing music written before the 1800s with his ensembles. Savall has several recordings that include *villancicos de negro*; he presents them in a manner to which his

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<sup>115</sup>Jordi Savall, "Jordi Savall, Biography," accessed March 11, 2019, <https://www.alia-vox.com/en/artists/jordi-savall/>.

audiences are extremely receptive. In an interview with NPR on the music of Spain and Mexico, Savall states:

"The Africans were slaves in this context -- they had to do the most difficult work. And then there were the native people...The music that we are still singing today, from the Baroque and the end of the Renaissance, is a mixture of old Spain, African rhythms and songs, and Indian influences."<sup>116</sup>

While the validity of "African rhythms" is questionable, Savall believes his aim is to show the importance of African contribution to music of Spain and New Spain. In his album entitled "The Routes of Slavery," Savall makes a unique claim for performing music of the past. In the album, he performs a plethora of *villancicos de negro*, as well as other forms of music he believes to have significant value to the history of Spanish colonization. As a part of the album, his goal is to highlight music that comes from a colonial dark past representative of European bondage and inequality. He feels responsible to not only pay homage to those enslaved, but to create awareness that slavery is ongoing and affects many people today. In this album, he states:

"...That the advantage of being aware of the past enables us to be more responsible and therefore morally obliges us to take a stand against these inhuman practices. The music in this programme represents the true living history of that long and painful past...We also want to draw attention to the fact that, at the beginning of the third millennium, this tragedy is still ongoing for more than 30 million human beings...We need to speak out in indignation and say that

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<sup>116</sup> "A Common Thread: Music of Spain of Spain and Mexico," NPR.org, last modified October 27, 2010, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130835654>.

humanity is not doing what it should to put an end to slavery and other related forms of exploitation.”<sup>117</sup>

Savall has other albums devoted to the *villancico* genre including one entitled *Villancicos y Danzas Criollas: De La Iberia Antigua Al Nuevo Mundo* (Of the Old Iberia and New World). This album has a collection of *villancicos de negro*, juxtaposed with other “light-natured” songs categorized as *juguetes*, *ensaladas* and *criollas*. The tone of the literature shares a character that is light and trivial, designed for comedic purposes. In performance, his ensembles use improvisatory percussion, as well as *habla de negros* as written. Savall has laid a foundation of how he performs *villancicos de negro*, and influenced how other organizations around the world perform the same literature.

Teresa Paz and Ars Longa, Cuba

Teresa Paz, along with co-founder Aland López, initiated Cuba’s primary early music ensemble in 1994. Educated in Spain at the University Valladolid, Paz studied Spanish music and became the first musician to start an early music initiative in Cuba. Since then, she has directed many ensembles, festivals, and conferences, including the Esteban Salas Early Music Festival, the Church of San Francisco of Paula in Havana, and the Baroque Orchestra of National Conservatory of Music, which she created.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Jordi Savall, trans. by Jacqueline Minett, “Les Routes De L’Esclavage,” <https://www.alia-vox.com/en/catalogue/les-rutes-de-lesclavatge/>.

<sup>118</sup> “Conjunto de Música Antigua “Ars Longa,”” accessed March 11, 2019, <http://www.arslonga-habana.com/about>.

Along with Ars Longa, Paz promotes the performance of *villancicos de negro*, and other forms of Latin colonial music with the idea of reinventing the genre to highlight the African presence in Baroque music allowing the audience to hear the “unmistakable stamp of the African people.”<sup>119</sup> Paz is based in Cuba, a part of the Global South where African retentions are high. Her approach to the *villancico de negro* subgenre is somewhat different in delivery being from a local Cuban community. She uses authentic African instruments and performs alongside Afro-Latin musicians. She further believes that while the music portrays African people through a Spanish perspective, that the music expresses.

“...Cultural riches of the black population of Spanish America, its rhythms, its fantasy, its ways of celebrating, its extroverted joy, and vital energy. All this was done, however, without portraying directly the voices or sounds of a people but only their resonance within another tradition.”<sup>120</sup>

This idea solidifies that Paz believes there are authentic African retentions represented in the *villanco de negro* subgenre. Along with Ars Nova, Paz continues to share and teach world audiences on her perspective of early Latin music and influence other music ensembles in Cuba to promote music with similar narratives.

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<sup>119</sup> Geoff Baker, “Latin American Baroque: Performance as a Post-Colonial Act?” *Early Music*, 36, 3 (August 2008): 445.

<sup>120</sup> Sebastian Zubieta, “Program Notes,” accessed March 11, 2019, <http://mb1800.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Ars-Longa-notes.pdf>.

Eloy Cruz and Tembembe Ensamble Continuo, Mexico

Eloy Cruz is a Mexican musician and lead guitarist in Tembembe Ensamble Continuo.

This ensemble is devoted to researching and performing Latin Baroque music and traditional folk music of Mexico. They often juxtapose Baroque dance forms of Spain and New Spain with contemporary practices of the same dance forms or their derivatives.

Being primarily an instrumental ensemble, the group often collaborates with other notable musicians and music groups including Jordi Savall and Hespèrion XXI, Los Otros, and Mare Norum.

Cruz believes heavily in the tradition of folkloric music born in several parts of Mexico, namely Veracruz. The group even acquired its name from the historic Tembembe River that flows through Cuernavaca, an area of Mexico where the ensemble rehearses. Cruz also believes in maintaining cultural authenticity of African people in Mexico. African slaves once had a high population in colonial times and some of those practices have been retained in parts of Mexico where Afro-Mexican communities are present.

In interviewing Cruz, we discussed the importance of historically informed performance of the *villancico de negro* and the validity of performing the subgenre in a contemporary concert setting. Cruz believes that it is beyond difficult to know what practices were in rotation during the time a composition was created because very little documentation exists that describes the manner of how it was performed. He also believes that while HIP is indeed a movement, contemporary musicians often add contemporary conventions and other performance techniques that have the sole purpose of pleasing audiences. In this

regard, HIP is unique to the performer, and the challenge grows more rigorously in knowing what is an authentic practice of the *villancico de negro*. However, he does believe that while the *villancico de negro* is a musical representation of African slaves that contains many fallacies, there are oral traditions, instruments, and singing that exist in Mexican music and demonstrate the influences of both African slaves and the indigenous people of Mexico.

Jose Galván and Voz En Punto, Mexico

Born in Mexico, Jose Galván was fascinated by the sounds and colors of Mexican music and was even more intrigued with choral ensembles as a child. He had an affinity for different timbres in choral music and loved choral concerts both in church and in grade school. Galván studied voice at the National University School of Music.<sup>121</sup> There, he founded Voz En Punto, alongside Sonia Solórzano who is still a part of the ensemble. Galván studied choral conducting at the Cardenal Miranda Institute, and continued to build a reputation for Voz En Punto, becoming one of Mexico's premiere a capella groups.<sup>122</sup>

Voz En Punto is known for their devotion to Mexican folk music, telling stories through song that teaches audiences about Mexico's rich history. The ensemble has a total of nine albums, eight with recordings of *villancicos de negro*. Voz En Punto is unique in the sense that they do not stay true to the general consensus of HIP. Instead, they use modern

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<sup>121</sup> Voz en Punto, "Our History," accessed March 13, 2019, <http://www.vozenpunto.com/en/trayectoria>.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.



a capella group techniques and vocal style in performing the subgenre. Considering this, the ensemble showcases Mexican heritage through a compendium of Mexican choral music, but does not promote any form of African presence.

### Summary

The aforementioned music ensembles continue to perform Latin Baroque colonial music to date, and have become models for others to learn. While it is relatively rare to find a music ensemble within the United States devoted solely to performing the *villancico de negro*, there are many choral ensembles that have put forth recordings of *villancicos de negro*, and continue to perform them. Chanticleer, one of the world's most prominent male choral ensembles has two albums of Mexican Baroque music. (*Chanticleer: Mexican Baroque*, and *Chanticleer: Matins for the Virgin of Guadalupe*). The Santa Fe Desert Chorale, one the country's leading chamber ensembles also has two recordings that celebrate Hispanic colonial music (*A celebration of Hispanic Music*, and *Viva la Festividad*). Coro Hispano de San Francisco is a chamber ensemble, that performs music from the Spanish-speaking world, and aims to educate audiences on music of Latin influence. Their album *Ramillete*, is inclusive of folk music of Central and South America, with a heavy emphasis on Mexican Baroque music (including *villancicos de negro*).

These albums are a few examples of recordings within this country and there are others. The compendium of choral albums and recordings of *villancicos de negro* continues to

grow, and a vast majority of them are influenced by more seasoned ensembles that have laid the foundation for historically informed performance within the *villancico* genre.

## CHAPTER 8: Is it Acceptable to Perform the *Villancicos de negro*

### In a Contemporary Concert Setting?

We must take into account the origin, development and dissemination of the *villancico de negro* subgenre when considering the idea of performance in a contemporary setting. Today, the concepts of race, gender, and sexuality differ drastically in comparison to the time of the Spanish Baroque, in which we find that a large portion of music that survives is of the *villancico de negro* subgenre. The *villancicos de negro* that are not recognized as Christmas carols are rarely performed in the Spanish-speaking world, and are even less familiar in other countries. Yet, we may ask, is it acceptable to perform today's repertoire, such as the *villancico de negro*, that contains significant fictional stereotypes and characteristics about a body of people? In order to approach that question, several factors must be considered relative to text, appropriation, authenticity, and performance practice.

The current social climate continues to grow more aware and critical of concepts that are insensitive to any specific culture. While the social climate is also becoming more attentive to texts that may not respect a specific group of people, art of the past often reflects the societal values of the time. There exists a large gamut of music of the Western canon that is categorized under this umbrella, including the *villancico de negro*. Despite the increased enlightenment and more sensitive societal standards, *villancicos de negros* are still performed in certain areas of the world.

### In the Context of Time

Regarding historical context as it relates to the *villancico de negro*, the most prominent factor addressed in the subgenre is race. It is important to note that global reconstruction regarding race has been a consistent battle for a significant amount of time. However, a decrease in European dominance can be observed around the time of abolishing slavery.

Assuming the abolishment of slavery as the marker of global reconstruction, Spain and New Spain began the reconstruction process approximately fifty years earlier than the United States. In 1812, José Miguel Guridi y Alcocer and Agustín Argüelles fought for the abolishment of slavery in the Political Constitution of the Spanish Monarchy, but were unsuccessful.<sup>123</sup> Instead, the constitution gave equal rights to all Spanish residents and its territories, excluding slaves. By 1817, King Ferdinand VII implemented a ban on the importation of slaves to start in 1820, but still allowed slavery to exist for the following three years.

Mexican independence leader Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla demanded the abolition of slavery in 1810.<sup>124</sup> Soon thereafter, countries began to support ending slavery, but not necessarily banning it and making it unconstitutional.<sup>125</sup> Central America banned slavery completely in 1824. In South America, many countries followed the Law of Wombs, which solidified the idea that children born of slaves were born free, in order to

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<sup>123</sup> Virginia Guedea, "Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla" in Encyclopedia of Mexico, (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), 640,  
<http://www.artic.ua.es/biblioteca/u85/documentos/1701.pdf>.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

eventually eradicate slavery.<sup>126</sup> The purpose of this law was to end slavery, however, even after their independence from Spain, some South American countries continued slavery well beyond the Law of Wombs. Argentina for example, introduced the Law of Wombs in 1813, but did not officially abolish slavery until 1853.<sup>127</sup>

The period of Reconstruction in the United States began in 1863 with Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the Port Royal Experiment.<sup>128</sup> Reconstruction lasted 14 years with aims to give formerly enslaved Black people equal rights. As enacted by the 1787 Three-Fifths Compromise a black slave was not acknowledged as human. This law counted each slave as three-fifths of a person, until the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment repealed it in 1868.<sup>129</sup> Considering slavery was abolished in January of 1865, this confirms that black people were not even observed as completely human until three years *after* slavery was deemed unconstitutional.

### The Use of *Habla de negros* in a Contemporary Setting

We have seen that the *habla de negros* was a dialect of Spanish predicated on a pseudo idea of the way in which African slaves spoke in the Spanish-speaking world. The pidgin

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<sup>126</sup> Sueann Caulfield, *Interpreting Machado De Assis: Paternalism, Slavery, and the Free Womb Law. Honor, Status, and Law in Modern Latin America*, (Duke University Press, 2005,), 99.

<sup>127</sup> Erika Edwards, "Slavery in Argentina" Oxfordindex.org, May, 2014, <http://oxfordindex.oup.com/view/10.1093/obo/9780199766581-0157>.

<sup>128</sup> Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, (Harper Collins, 2011), 25.

<sup>129</sup> Steven Philbrick, "Understanding the Three-Fifths Compromise," *San Antonio Express News*, Sept. 2018, <https://www.expressnews.com/opinion/commentary/article/Understanding-the-three-fifths-compromise-13230903.php>.

language capitalized on a lazy structure that used the mispronunciation and misspelling of words through added and shortened syllables, intended aphaeresis, and incorrect gender pronouns. *Habla de negros* also incorporates pseudo words to imitate places and instruments born of Africa. Knowing that one of the major components of the *villancico de negro* is the use of *habla de negros*, prominent modern performers like Jordi Savall and Teresa Paz should consider what this text denotes when choosing to perform this music.

During the Spanish Baroque, *habla de negros* was meant to be a mockery, negatively imitating sounds of blackness through a Spanish perspective. Considering the use of *habla de negros* in a modern-day setting, one must take several things into account if choosing to perform this literature. Primarily, slaves were observed as being less than human and the *habla de negros* contributes to that notion. The usage of *habla de negros* further illustrated the idea that people of African descent were uneducated, and incapable of learning and speaking correctly. *Habla de negros* can be observed in literature far beyond the height of the *villancico de negro* with writers such as Lope de Vega and Cervantes. Their development of black characters in literature and the use of *habla de negros* contributes to the European-derived idea that black people are uneducated figures incapable of knowing the difference between male and female. The only way a black character could be seen as more than a slave is if he/she were to have a closer proximity

to whiteness. This was represented by holding Christian values and learning European-derived literature, as modeled by Juan Latino back in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>130</sup>

The use of *habla de negros* also dismisses African culture. Not only does *habla de negros* intentionally mispronounce words, but it also developed names for pseudo-African places, instruments, and a host of other things that misrepresent the continent of Africa. In the *villancico de negro* pseudo instruments were used, the ‘zambomba’ for example in Juan Gutierrez de Padilla’s “*Ah siolo Flasiquiyo*.” European-derived percussion instruments were used to imitate the sounds of African ones, as the tambourine and the rebec are both referenced by Tomás and Anton to give praise in the same aforementioned *villancico de negro* by Padilla.<sup>131</sup> Also, the use of pseudo words “casú,” and “cucumbé,” have no African derived significance, but are used in Gaspar Fernandes’ “*Eso rigor e repente*” as the characters dance to the Spanish *Sarabanda*.

Lastly, *habla de negros* encourages misrepresenting the origin of African people. As observed in the *villancico de negro*, home is often referred to as Guinea (a country) and Timbuktu (a city). While both of those places exist in Africa, many other countries invaded and colonized by Europeans are often disregarded, such as Nigeria, Niger,

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<sup>130</sup> Andrew Sobiesuo, “Images of Blacks and Africa in Spanish Literature,” *Journal of Dagaare Studies* (2002): 2, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.520.5856&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

<sup>131</sup> Juan Gutierrez de Padilla, Aurelio Tello rev., “Tres Cuadernos de Navidad: 1653, 1655, 1657,” [http://www3.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Tres\\_Cuadernos\\_de\\_Navidad:\\_1653,\\_1655,\\_1657\\_\(Juan\\_Gutierrez\\_de\\_Padilla\)](http://www3.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Tres_Cuadernos_de_Navidad:_1653,_1655,_1657_(Juan_Gutierrez_de_Padilla)).

Sudan, Angola, the Gold Coast, as well as several other countries off the western coast of Africa.

The use of these pseudoisms implemented by *habla de negros* completely disregards African-derived instruments and dance forms. They do not take into account authentic African music-making and further illustrates the idea of mocking a culture with no genuine motive to illustrate Africanness in a positive light.

In the current social climate, performing works that use *habla de negros* is inappropriate.

#### Character Roles

In addition to the *habla de negros*, *villancicos de negro* feature African people in restricted character roles. The *villancico de negro* used characters that played specific roles in society and are emotionally limited. African characters were solely “lords of the dance,” childlike figures with very limited education; they had a specific place at the bottom of society as labor workers who found solace through Christianity. These character roles have been the underpinnings of so many other forms of literature that extend beyond the Spanish-speaking world, as slavery of African people was a global phenomenon.

Specifically, within the United States, the portrayal of black people through the 20<sup>th</sup> century upheld congruent roles to that of the *villancico de negro* in vocal repertoire, theatre, movies, and other forms of media. Minstrelsy was a form of entertainment in the



United States that began in the early 1800s (not long after the decline of the *villancico* genre). Components of minstrelsy included white people with black-faced make-up appearing to be black people, and minstrel characters who were dim-witted and uneducated, almost always happy, and very superstitious.<sup>132</sup> Blacks were encouraged to take part in minstrel shows, and the genre was thought to give blacks a pedestal for performance in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Instituted in 1832, the fictitious character Jim Crow became a commercial caricature popularized by performer Thomas Dartmouth “Daddy” Rice.<sup>133</sup> The character Jim Crow was a racist trope based on a physically disabled African slave who resided in the south. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the character came to represent southern States that upheld state and local laws of racial segregation, known as Jim Crow laws.<sup>134</sup>

Knowing the *villancico de negro* was sacred and intended to be joyous and comedic in nature, one would think that the subgenre would connect to other sacred choral genres, gospel for example. Yet, besides the fact that the origins of gospel are rooted in blackness, the *villancico de negro* uses characters (and caricatures) which recalls minstrelsy. Contrastingly, the *villancico de negro* was sacred and most often performed in churches, whereas minstrelsy was secular and seen in taverns and theatres. However, while the *villancico de negro* was not performed in blackface, the theatrical elements and

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<sup>132</sup> John Kenrick, “A History of the Musical: Minstrel Shows,” *Musicals 101*, [Musicals101.com/minstrel.htm](http://Musicals101.com/minstrel.htm).

<sup>133</sup> Ken Padgett, “Blackface Minstrel Shows,” *Blackface!* (August 20, 2014), <http://black-face.com/minstrel-shows.htm>.

<sup>134</sup> Bruce Bartlett, *Wrong on Race: The Democratic Party's Buried Past*, (St. Martin's Press, January, 2008), 24.

caricatures of the subgenre encourages racism. In this regard, characteristics of minstrelsy align with features of the *villancico de negro*.

Ex: 8-1a and 1b (a) left photo: The Adoration of the King, Spain 1612 by Juan Batista Maíno. (b) right photo: the character Jim Crow implemented by Thomas Dartmouth Rice in the 1830's.



Minstrelsy was a popular form of entertainment well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century and even became a staple for prominent American composers who were a part of the Western canon. Aaron Copland's "Ching-A-Ring Chaw," is a prime example of a minstrel song arranged for both solo voice and chorus, and can be found in his Old American Songs set, published in 1952. This song remains a part of the American choral/vocal repertoire, can be found on many contemporary recordings, and heard in a plethora of concert venues

performed by choirs throughout the country. Even though some audiences may not be offended by this literature, performing music that degrades a specific group of people due to language and character roles is insulting, offensive and racist.

Ex: 8-2 Aaron Copland's Ching-a-Ring Chaw, Minstrel Song, mm 1-18

## CHING-A-RING CHAW

(Minstrel Song)

Arranged by  
AARON COPLAND

Lively tempo (with bounce)

(to be played with a light, sharp staccato throughout)



*senza* *sf* (mark the left hand) *sfz*

*mf*

Ching-a-ring-a ring ching ching, Ho-a ding-a ding kum lar-kee,

*sim. mf*

Ching-a-ring-a ring ching ching, Ho-a ding kum lar-kee.

*mp*

Broth-ers gath-er round, Lis-ten to this

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In regard to emotional depth, *villancicos de negro* exhibit several limits for African characters. With the exception of the *villancicos* of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz (for which only the text survives), characters within the *villancico de negro* most often experience sentiments of happiness, silliness, and excitement. These emotions were ignited by performing for baby Jesus, or some other hierarchal white character, or they were inspired by God. Limiting the emotional responses of adult African characters made them appear childlike. As adults behaving like children, the characters are presented as dull-witted and buffoonish. This, again, is very similar to the characters in minstrelsy. Performing *villancicos de negro* celebrates the idea that black people are immature and lack the ability to develop emotionally.

Overall, the African characters in *villancicos de negro* are presented as less human than Europeans within the genre. In a contemporary setting as well as in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, displaying a body of literature that presents darker characters with limited emotional responses is demeaning and inappropriate, as it devalues the capabilities of a black and indigenous people.

### Challenges of Performance

If this body of literature illustrates a group of people in a manner that is unfavorable, then there are definite challenges when performing the *villancicos de negro* in a contemporary environment in which the concepts of race, class, and gender have advanced beyond what they were in the Baroque. However, while there has been progress in the United States,

*villancicos de negro* are currently performed in Spanish-speaking countries during Advent season.

Spain and Latin America have a continued tradition of singing *villancicos* during the Christmastide. In this realm, the singing of *villancicos de negro* lives, and is not necessarily offensive, airing more on the side of tradition. In the Spanish-speaking world, the construction of race has manifested differently within the United States. The words *negro(a)*, *negrito(a)*, *moren(a)*, *morenito(a)* are Spanish terms used to refer to the darker pigmentation of someone's skin in a modern-day setting. Calling someone "the dark/black one" in the Spanish-speaking countries is often used as a term of endearment.<sup>135</sup> While the terms may have other connotations, its use in music, literature, and everyday speech make them familiar terms that are not equivalent to calling someone "the black/dark one" in the United States. The terms *nigger*, *nig'ra*, *negroid*, *colored*, *negro* and *darky*, are not ones of endearment. These words reflect a brutal history that is connected exclusively to black people and black culture in a manner, which is rooted in white supremacy.

On a much larger scale, some of the most celebrated pieces of vocal music in the Western canon exoticize a culture through the composer's uneducated perspective. For example, Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* and Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* both exoticize East

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<sup>135</sup> John Betancur, *Cedric Herring. Reinventing Race, Reinventing Racism*, (BRILL, 2012), 55.

Asian culture. In this regard, there are methods that may help modern performers who choose to perform literature of previous time periods.

When presenting a body of literature, program notes can help educate an audience, and give pertinent contextual information for the literature being performed. Programs are an avenue to become familiar with the performer(s), as well as familiarize an audience with anecdotal information about historical data, and salient features of the music. For example, Jordi Savall attempts to educate audiences about the *villancio de negro* in his program notes. The absence of this historical information can leave audience blind to the context in which the works were created, leaving them to interpret the literature without knowing the composer's/performer's intent. It is crucial for performers to supply the audience with the appropriate tools necessary to help educate and understand. This avenue can also build a bridge for appreciating an art form that may have been unfamiliar.

In regard to performance, suitable casting and costuming can aide the presentation of a body of literature. In a contemporary setting, using a blackface character, as traditionally done in vocal music of the Western canon that calls for darker pigmented characters, has been exercised since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was not until recently that music institutions began to take a stand against blackface being a representation of racism. The opera *Otello* (composed both by Verdi and Rossini, based on the play by Shakespeare), for example, traditionally placed the leading tenor role in blackface; however, the Metropolitan Opera

deemed it an unacceptable practice.<sup>136</sup> As of 2015, the Metropolitan Opera decided it was most fitting to cast more people of color in such roles, and banned the usage of dark-toned cosmetics for characters of color.<sup>137</sup> While this is a step forward for the Metropolitan Opera of New York City, other notable opera establishments around the world have yet to establish the same practice. As it relates to performing the *villancico de negro*, performers should set the same parameters that are falling into place with opera. It would be inappropriate to have a black character perform in blackface or to designate black characters to sing character roles that portray caricatures. As stated in the Historically Informed Performance chapter, an HIP performance would call for white people to perform *villancico de negro* characters. The black character role is often more demeaning than not; and casting a black person, or anyone for that matter, to play such a role (as done in minstrelsy) is deeply racist.

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<sup>136</sup> Anne Midgette, "The Rarity of Black Faces, not 'Otello' in Blackface, Should Be Issue in Opera," *The Washington Post*, October 16 2015, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/music/how-do-african-american-singers-feel-about-blackface-in-opera/2015/10/16/fbbaa318-7176-11e5-9cbb-790369643cf9\\_story.html?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.8dcaba154280](https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/music/how-do-african-american-singers-feel-about-blackface-in-opera/2015/10/16/fbbaa318-7176-11e5-9cbb-790369643cf9_story.html?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8dcaba154280).

<sup>137</sup> Aria Umezawa, "Met's Otello casting begs the question: Is Whitewash Better than Blackface?" *The Globe and Mail*, August 7 2015, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/mets-otello-casting-begs-the-question-is-whitewash-better-than-blackface/article25879634/>.



Ex: 8-3 Tenor Placido Domingo performing the title role in blackface in the Metropolitan Opera's 1994 production of *Otello*



While performers may invest in educating their audiences, it does not change the composer's/author's intended nature of their literature. Giving art a platform to be heard and celebrated is ultimately the nature of performance. In this respect, music that degrades a group of people and devalues their intellectual capability is not an art form to be celebrated. Even as race is acknowledged differently in Spain and its colonized regions, cultural practices should not be an excuse for upholding inhumane traditions that misrepresent a people.

## Conclusion

Yes, it is important to learn about such pieces of choral music. Their history and dissemination as well the ways in which they are viewed in other parts of the world should not be ignored. For centuries, the *villancico de negro*'s comedic content has mocked black people largely through the use of caricatures, *habla de negros*, and a false representation of African culture. The caricatures dehumanize a people by portraying blacks as intellectually limited, childlike, and content being enslaved. The use of *habla de negros* uses language to promote the idea that black people were incapable of speaking correctly with the intentional use of mispronounced words, aphesis, incorrect gender pronouns, and pseudo African words. Musically, the *villancico de negro* takes on forms of other European genres of the time (madrigals, chanson, cantata) and endorses a false idea of African music and culture. The music of the *villancico de negro* is European, and was designed to imitate sounds of Africa through a European lens.

This music promotes racism in a way that is reflective of other racist art forms in the Global North. Although a paraliturgical genre, the *villancico de negro* resosnates more with secular music that uses caricatures poor imagery of black people, as obserseved in minstrelsy. Performing the *villancico de negro* specifically in the Global North ignores a brutal past of white supremacy.

This exploration has been a personal journey for me, as a black man who has completed research abroad and seen performances of *villancicos de negro*. I find these performances extremely hurtful and deeply offensive. Performing the subgenre recalls times in history

where people who looked like me were devalued and degraded. Therefore, I cannot condone performing it regardless of a performer's contribution or geographical location. Sadly, the very acceptance of the *villancicos de negro* shows how far we have not come. However, it is my goal to educate the choral community and its audiences on the nuances of the *villancico de negro*, and why it no longer deserves a platform for performance.

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