

Whether treasures, revelations or just enjoyable pieces of music, eighteenth-century compositions from New Spain (colonial Mexico) and peninsular Spain offer new perspectives on how we conceive of music history. Many of the works that will be heard on tonight's concert once embellished religious services in Mexico City, Puebla, Durango and Zaragoza, and are being performed for the first time in over two hundred years. Hispanic church music in the eighteenth century shows a strong affinity with musical practices in Naples and Rome, and some listeners might be surprised by how Italian the music sounds. In fact, most of the pieces reflect the galant style, namely the modern style of composition originating in Naples around 1720 that quickly developed into an international phenomenon on account of its lyricism, simplicity, and adaptability to both churches and theaters. For that reason some of the pieces will sound similar to mid eighteenth-century opera. Indeed, the connections with Italy run deep: the composers represented include Italians working in New Spain (Jerusalem, Billoni) and Portugal (Perez); Spaniards who had worked in Italy (García Fajer) or in New Spain in Italian styles (Tollis de la Rocca); and even a Oaxacan who found his own voice in the galant style without the luxury of European music training (Abella Grijalva). While this repertoire stands on its own in terms of aesthetic merit, it is nonetheless fascinating to reconsider what we know about composers such as Handel, Pergolesi or Mozart after exposure to the Hispanic traditions.

*Symphony in G Major*

Ignacio Jerusalem (1707-1769)

As is well known, the symphony surged in popularity during the 1740s and 1750s and became one of the defining music genres of the eighteenth century. At that time, the symphony consisted of three short movements lasting about ten minutes and was similar to the Italian opera overture. In fact, stand-alone symphonies tended to be confusingly labeled "overtures" whereas opera overtures took the title "sinfonias" during the mid-century. Many hundreds of symphonies were composed in Europe during the eighteenth century, but only a handful is known to have been written in the Americas. One of these pieces is the *Symphony in G major* by Ignacio Jerusalem, which is a typical galant symphony with catchy tunes and a light character.

Jerusalem, the most represented composer on tonight's concert, grew up in a musical family in Lecce, Puglia and left Italy trained in contemporary music. His career as an opera composer and cellist took him to Cádiz, Spain in 1732 and then to Mexico City, where he first worked as a theater musician. Performing in the cathedral from 1746, he attained the position of chapelmaster in 1750. Surviving documents paint Jerusalem as a colorful figure whose marital and legal troubles landed him in jail at least twice; nonetheless his musical abilities and compositions were praised widely and he should be considered the primary agent of musical modernization in New Spain during the period. He is one of only two Italian born musicians known to have achieved the status of chapelmaster in New Spain during the viceregal period (the other is Santiago Billoni).

*Es aurora presurosa*

Jerusalem

This *da capo* aria resembles a galant oratorio or *opera seria* aria, but exists as a stand alone piece intended for religious services. The elegant violin figuration exemplifies the gracefulness favored at the time, and the embellished vocal writing serves as a platform for bel canto singing. Like a typical Italian aria, the singer first presents the text with a tuneful though less adorned melody, and then sings complex vocal ornaments, some improvised, on the keywords with appropriately open vowel sounds, such as "mar" (sea). The text celebrates the idea of Christ as Savior by using the symbol of the dawn.

Es aurora presurosa,  
luz y día  
que da alegría  
a tierra y mar.

It is a hasty dawn,  
light and day  
that gives joy  
to land and sea.

Es constante vigilante,  
centinela y solo anhelo  
a nuestro bien singular.

It is a constant watchman  
and sentinel whose only desire  
is for our own good.

*Symphony in D major, "La tempestad del mar"*

David Perez (1711-1778)

Unlike the Jerusalem symphony, the *Symphony in D major "La tempestad del mar"* (The Storm at Sea) by David Perez is a programmatic work. Depicting the common eighteenth-century image of the maritime storm, the symphony uses fast *tremolo* string writing and dissonance to paint the tempest, which dissipates into a lyrical second movement titled "rainbow." The melodic figures in the second movement have an arc shape to them which conjure up the rainbow idea when looking at the score. The piece looks backward to Vivaldi and forward to representations of storms in Gluck and Beethoven. Whereas the only known source of this piece survives in Durango, Mexico, composer David Perez never left Europe. An Italian born in Naples of Spanish ancestry, Perez spent much of his life working for the royal court in Lisbon, Portugal, where he wrote many operas.

*Mariposa inadvertida*

Santiago Billoni (c1700-c1763)

Santiago Billoni, a native of Rome, served as chapelmaster of Durango Cathedral, in northern New Spain, between 1749 and 1755, the apex of that city's economic heyday. Billoni took an especially emotional approach to composition, and wrote unusually complex violin parts which he performed himself. This Easter season aria showcases galant tunefulness in the soprano part as well as some subtle text painting in the violins during the passages in which swirling motives might be interpreted as representing a fluttering butterfly. If compared with *Es aurora presurosa* by Jerusalem, heard earlier on the program, the Billoni piece is more contrapuntal and Roman in style, which might be seen as heavier or more academic than the Neapolitan style. Professor Davies's critical edition of the complete works of Billoni will be available in the *Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque* series from A-R Editions in April 2011.

Mariposa inadvertida  
que a la luz te vuelves ciega,  
pues tu amor tanto se pega,  
a quien te quita la vida.

Unnoticed butterfly  
that comes back blinded by light,  
your love is so attached  
to him who dies for you.

Que te apartes de tu engaño  
te aconsejo pues advierte  
que te cercas a tu muerte  
si no tomas desengaño.

So that you move away from deception,  
I advise you to pay attention,  
because you'll be approaching death  
if you don't take the blow.

*Dulce incendio* is a vocal duet dedicated to the Virgin Mary. In the Spanish world, the cycle of Marian feast days was celebrated with special vigor throughout the year and included the feasts of the Immaculate Conception, Purification, and most importantly for Mexico City, the Assumption of Mary, the patron of the cathedral. The liturgical texts, visual iconography, and other devotional materials for these feasts share a consistent set of symbols and themes. Like many Italianate texts, the words to *Dulce incendio* capitalize on the possibilities offered by using one work for a multiplicity of feast days and dwell on the general concept of fire, a symbol of both the Holy Spirit and light. Modern texts like this one at the mid-century exemplify the contemporary elite preference for interior devotion by focusing on the experience of a single devoted person's relationship with religious figures, an important shift from earlier baroque literary ideals.

Dulce incendio,  
suave ardor,  
puro amor  
fiel me abrasa a incendio,  
pasa la alegría del corazón.

Sweet fire,  
gentle ardor,  
pure love  
faithfully the fire consumes me,  
happiness flows from my heart.

Es María fiel  
contento todo aumento  
y en tal gloria  
la memoria pone  
en vela a la razón.

It is faithful Mary,  
content I elevate everything  
and in such glory  
the memory turns itself  
to reason.

Throughout the eighteenth century there was a trend of composing arias, duets, and villancicos for the feast of St. Peter. *Gorjeos trinando* is an example of a duet for the feast, which although shared with St. Paul, generally has music only in celebration of St. Peter. Jerusalem's duet focuses on Matthew 26: 69-75, Peter's denial of Christ and his sorrow. Many New Spanish pieces for St. Peter include textual and musical references to the rooster's cry and Peter's tears, topics that will be revisited in the villancicos by Abella Grijalva. The melody in this work is highly ornamented with trills and figuration in the voices and violins to represent the rooster's cry, Peter's lament, and his heightened emotional state.

Gorjeos trinando, el gallo cantando  
de Pedro afligido responde al gemido  
y en esto le advierte llore su pecado,  
y el Apóstol Santo se deshace en llanto,  
siendo consonancia una y otra voz.

With warbling trills, the cock singing  
of Peter afflicted responds to the groan  
and in that warns him to cry for his sin  
and the Holy Apostle dissolves into tears,  
creating harmony between the two voices.

Cantando, llorando  
ya que esta armonía  
le causa alegría,  
pues le gusta al cielo  
de Pedro el desvelo,

Singing, crying  
now that this harmony  
produces happiness,  
Heaven is pleased by  
Peter's vigilance, seeing himself

mirándose en sol-fa su triste dolor.

in counterpoint with his sad pain.

*Non fecit taliter*

Jerusalem

This short versicle by Jerusalem serves the feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the celebration of the apparitions of the Virgin Mary to the indigenous peasant Cuauhtlatohuac, or Juan Diego, that purportedly occurred near Mexico City in 1531. Pope Benedict XIV elevated the feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe to official status in 1754 during Jerusalem's term as chapelmaster in Mexico City. Composers had been writing villancicos in Spanish for the Virgin of Guadalupe since the seventeenth century, but it was Jerusalem, recognizing the feast's new status, who first composed a sizeable repertoire of liturgical pieces in Latin for it. Of all devotions, this is the most quintessentially Mexican, for it celebrates a local topic and eventually came to symbolize Mexican nationalism. It is said that this text, an excerpt from Psalm 147 that expresses the idea of God bestowing special favor on a specific group of people, became associated with the feast because Pope Benedict XIV uttered it when learning about the story. Jerusalem's setting of the words in G minor gives a sense of mystery and grandeur to the concept, despite the brief duration of the piece.

Non fecit taliter omni nationi  
et judicia sua non manifestabit eis.

He has not done the like to every nation and  
his judgments have not been made manifest  
to them.

*Christum regem*

Antonio de Salazar (c1650-1715)

The oldest piece on the program, this beautiful a cappella setting of the invitatory for Matins on Corpus Christi was written by Antonio de Salazar for Puebla Cathedral around the 1680s in the antique style deemed appropriate for the liturgy. Most likely a Spaniard by birth, Salazar served as chapelmaster of Puebla and then Mexico City cathedrals and left a large repertoire of sober choral pieces, as well as less sober Spanish-language villancicos written in the rhythmic theater style of Madrid. Although this work looks very short on the page – each of the four parts covers less than 2 staves on small sheets of paper – it actually forms a substantial musical experience when integrated with the liturgy. In ritual practice, a psalm is intoned after the invitatory itself, with either all or a portion of the invitatory repeated after every verse of the psalm. Much liturgical polyphony functions this way, yet too many modern day performances excise the chant, which was a fundamental part of the work's conception. The chant does not appear in the music manuscript since the singers would either have it memorized or read it separately in choirbooks. In this performance, a few verses of the psalm will be intoned in chant in order to demonstrate how polyphony and chant would interact in almost hypnotic alternation during religious services.

Christum regem adoremus  
dominantem gentibus: Qui se  
manducantibus dat Spiritus pinguedinem.

Let us worship Christ the king, Lord of all  
the nations of the earth: Who feedeth men's  
souls on himself, the living bread from  
heaven.

*Canta el gallo*

José Bernardo Abella Grijalva (c1740-c1803)

Two villancicos by José Bernardo Abella Grijalva, *Canta el gallo* and *Silencio quedito*, illustrate how a local composer in provincial New Spain adapted the galant style to local needs. Unusually for music intended for Catholic church services, villancicos have texts in Spanish rather than Latin, and

represent one of the most characteristic genres in earlier Spanish musics. Abella Grijalva, a native of Oaxaca, worked as chapelmaster in Durango between 1781 and 1786. His music might be considered an original take on the galant style replete with creative and unusual instances of text painting, such as his use of a counterpoint exercise to represent the words “sweet counterpoint” (*dulces contrapuntos*) in this story of St. Peter and the rooster. The words to this villancico are old-fashioned for the late eighteenth century, even though the music sounds fairly modern for its time and place. Thus Abella’s works tend to mix modern sounding music with archaic poetic conceits. As will be heard toward the beginning of this piece, Abella does not shy away from either dissonance or counterpoint, and in fact the duality between the chromatic music representing tears at the beginning and the lighter music in the rest of the piece serves as a large-scale text painting of the central idea of counterpoint.

Canta el gallo y llora Pedro.  
 No sin misterio que estuvo en su llanto el  
 acertar la composición de un duo.  
 Ay, que tiernas las lágrimas forman un eco  
 sonoro, un blando murmullo al compás del  
 acento armonioso del ave canora que a  
 Pedro fue susto.  
 Que bien que se alternan al paso que agudos  
 son de canto y llanto dulces contrapuntos.  
 Cuánto más en distantes extremos el amor  
 dispuso de su misma discordia el concierto,  
 del suspiro y las penas el gusto.

The rooster sings and Peter cries.  
 It’s no mystery that the knowledge of how to  
 write a duet was in his tears.  
 Oh, how gently the tears form a sonorous  
 echo, a soft murmur to the measure of the  
 harmonious accent of the songbird that  
 frightened Peter.  
 How good it is that sweet, well-formed  
 counterpoint alternates singing and weeping.  
 And how even better that from distant  
 extremes, love arranged concord from its  
 own discord, delight from sighs and sorrows.

*Silencio quedito*

Abella Grijalva

Probably premiered during the same service as *Canta el gallo*, *Silencio quedito* also showcases Abella’s penchant for surprise modulations and tuneful musical figures. Technically a bichoral work with strings, Abella pits a soprano soloist (the first choir) against a homophonic four-voice choir for a total of five voices. This arrangement gives a sense of an individual professing his or her belief with the support and approval of the collective.

Silencio, quedito de manera que apenas la  
 voz no distinga si el céfiro blando, el aliento  
 remiso la hurtó.  
 Mas, oh Pedro, así duerme tu amor, cuando  
 al bien que tú adoras le amargan sus penas,  
 sus ansias, su triste pasión.  
 Despierta, no duermas más, Pedro.

Silently, softly as if indistinguishable from a  
 light zephyr, the reluctant breath made off  
 with the voice.  
 Peter, your love sleeps like that. When you  
 love the good, your pains, longings and sad  
 passion make you bitter.  
 Wake up! Sleep no longer, Peter!

*Veni sponsa Christi*

Mateo Tollis de la Rocca (1714-1781)

Matheo Tollis de la Rocca was born in Madrid, and likely worked for the Royal Chapel in that city for several years before emigrating to Mexico City in 1755. He soon was hired as an organist at Mexico City Cathedral and assistant composer to Ignacio Jerusalem; however, after several years, he

was reduced to a more limited role and during the 1760s almost ceased composing altogether. After Jerusalem died, Tollis was named chapelmaster and held the post from 1770 until his death. His *Veni sponsa Christi* (1764) is one of three works that can be dated to his period of limited output.

The cover page of the manuscript of this piece affords a unique glimpse into the religious life of women in Mexico City. It was written in honor of a nun, M. R. M. Josepha, who was making her final profession to the Santísimo Sacramento convent. There was no more important occasion in the life of a nun than her final profession, and it was typically a time for celebration. The antiphon *Veni sponsa Christi* was a common text to be set to music, as it calls to the “bride of Christ to receive her “crown.” Because a cloistered nun was never married, she was seen as being married to Christ and respected as such in the community, even though she was rarely, if ever, seen. Thus, professing as a nun was considered to be a viable career choice for a woman, whether she was orphaned or from a noble family. The music portrays the celebratory nature of the ceremony by its major key and bright, happy melody and rhythm.

Veni, sponsa Christi,  
accipe coronam  
quam tibi Dominus  
præparavit in æternum,

Come, bride of Christ,  
receive the crown  
which the Lord has prepared  
for you for all eternity.

*Dixit Dominus*

Francisco Javier García Fajer (1730-1809)

In terms of length and orchestral forces required, the most substantial piece on the program is the *Dixit Dominus* by Francisco Javier García Fajer. Known in his time as “Lo spagnoletto,” García Fajer counts as one of the more prolific composers of the eighteenth century, and given that his works reached churches in California, Chile and the Philippines during or shortly after his lifetime, he was one of the most widely disseminated. A native of Logroño, La Rioja (Spain) and a near contemporary of Haydn, García Fajer lived in Rome writing operas and church pieces during the early 1750s before accepting the position of chapelmaster at *La Seo* of Zaragoza (Spain), where he produced one of the largest repertoires of Spanish galant music.

The *Dixit Dominus*, a Vespers psalm, takes the form of a cantata, meaning that it consists of a series of contrasting movements or sections based upon logical divisions of the text. A technique characteristic of Italian composers, the cantata format adds a sense of dramatic intrigue to well-known religious texts by creating a flow resembling an opera scene. García Fajer’s setting frames three virtuosic solo arias with two majestic choral sections, and by so doing balances a sense of religious grandeur with the intimate expression of individual believers. A dramatic accompanied recitative occurs at the center of the work, the moment in the text when “the Lord has sworn.” Vespers psalms like this one, in a late galant or classical style, mark a pivot in music history, namely the trend of large-scale settings of religious texts increasingly serving as concert works rather than exclusively functional pieces for church services.

Dixit Dominus Domino meo:  
Sede a dextris meis.  
Donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum  
pedum tuorum.  
Virgam potentiae tuae emittet Dominus ex  
Sion:

The Lord says to my lord:  
“Sit at my right hand  
until I make your enemies  
a footstool for your feet.”  
The Lord will extend your mighty scepter  
from Zion saying, “Rule in the midst of your

dominare in medio inimicorum tuorum.  
Tecum principatus in die virtutis tuae, in  
splendoribus sanctis.  
Ex utero ante luciferum genui te.  
Juravit Dominus et non paenitebit eum:  
Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum  
ordinem Melchisedech.  
Dominus a dextris tuis,  
confregit in die irae suae reges.  
Judicabit in nationibus:  
Implebit ruinas, conquassabit capita in terra  
multorum.  
De torrente in via bibet,  
propterea exaltabit caput.  
Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.  
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et  
in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

enemies!” Your troops will be willing on  
your day of battle. Arrayed in holy splendor,  
your young men will come to you like dew  
from the morning’s womb.

The Lord has sworn and will not change his  
mind; “You are a priest forever in the order  
of Melchizedek.”

The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush  
kings on the day of his wrath.

He will judge the nations, heaping up the  
dead and crushing rulers of the whole earth.

He will drink from a brook along the way,  
and so he will lift his head high.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to  
the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is  
now, and will be for ever. Amen.

program notes and translations from the Spanish by  
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