

“Con la armonía del cielo,” Christmas in 17th Century Guatemala

Meridionalis and The Bishop's Band

Trinity Wall Street’s Twelfth Night Festival 2015

The *villancico* is a poetic and musical form that was extremely popular in the courts and churches of the Spanish empire from the 16th to the 19th centuries. They were particularly favored at Christmastime. The diocese of Guatemala was one of the first established by the Europeans in the Americas. Developed in collaboration with Guatemalan musicologist and colonial music expert Omar Morales Abril, "Con la armonía del cielo" features Christmas music from the archive of the Diocese of Guatemala, founded in 1534, including works from Guatemala, Mexico and Spain. Meridionalis and The Bishops Band are led by Americas Society Music Director Sebastián Zubieta and GEMAS co-curator Nell Snaidas.

Program:

<i>La Bomba</i> (fragment)	Mateo Flecha (1481-1553)
<i>Atención</i>	Tomás Torrejón y Velasco (1644-1728)
<i>Christus natus est nobis</i>	Pedro Bermúdez (fl. 1574-1604)
Missa de Bomba: Kyrie	Pedro Bermúdez
Missa de Bomba: Gloria	Pedro Bermúdez
<i>Nace y al frío</i>	Fray Felipe de la Madre de Dios
<i>Si tembláis</i>	Fray Gerónimo González de Mendoza (fl. 1633-1662)
Missa de Bomba: Credo	Pedro Bermúdez
<i>La Bomba</i> (fragment)	
<i>Alegrando los cielos y tierra</i>	Fray Gerónimo González de Mendoza
Missa de Bomba: Sanctus-Benedictus	Pedro Bermúdez
<i>Si duerme el amor</i>	Manuel de Sumaya (1680-1755)

En mitad de la noche

Juan Corchado
(fl. 1725-1728)

Missa de Bomba: Agnus Dei

Pedro Bermúdez

En un portal mal cubierto

Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla
(ca. 1590-1664)

Oh, qué bien si a la escarcha se hiela

Fray Felipe de la Madre de Dios

Performers:

Elizabeth Baber, Laura Heimes, Nell Snaidas	sopranos
Patrick Fennig, Kirsten Sollek	altos
Steven Caldicott-Wilson, Sebastian Zubieta	tenors
Jesse Blumberg, Taylor Ward	basses
Priscilla Herreid	recorder/shawm
Clay Zeller-Townson	bajón
Grant Herreid, Charles Weaver	guitars
Christa Patton	harp
Dong Sok Shin	organ
Danny Mallon	percussion

S. Zubieta, N. Snaidas	directors
Tom Zajac	founder of The Bishop's Band

The Bishop's Band is named for the Bishop of Trujillo in northern Perú, Baltasar Jaime Martínez Compañón who compiled, in the late-18th century, a fascinating collection containing watercolor depictions of life in the region and 20 popular songs and dances. The group was gathered in 2013 by Tom Zajac and Nell Snaidas to perform repertory from this collection as well as other 18th-century Latin American music.

Americas Society's critically acclaimed vocal ensemble, **Meridionalis**, directed by Sebastian Zubieta and comprised of leading choral soloists in New York City, is dedicated to Latin American early music. It has appeared at the Look and Listen and Symphony Space's Wall to Wall Festivals (NYC), St. Paul's Chapel at Columbia University (with Clarion Society), and at the Biblioteca Juan Ángel Arango in Bogota. In February 2016 will perform as part of Festival de Música Antigua Esteban Salas in Havana.

We offer this concert in tribute to Tom Zajac (1956-2015) whose artistry, scholarship, devotion and great sense of fun continues to inspire us. He is forever in our hearts.

Manuel de Zumaya (ca. 1678, Mexico City – 1755, Oaxaca) served as a choirboy at the Mexico City Cathedral for a number of years before studying organ and composition. There is some evidence of a trip to Italy between 1700 and 1707, but scholars are not in agreement about the possibility. The premiere of his play *El Rodrigo*, in 1707 is the first recorded opera performance in Mexico. A few years later he wrote *La Partenope*; both these works are lost. Zumaya worked for many years as assistant to *Kapellmeister* Antonio de Salazar at the Cathedral, and was named principal organist in 1714. He held the post for 24 years, during which he oversaw the copying of an entire library's worth of manuscripts, significantly expanding the church's score collection. In 1738, on the request of the archbishop, Zumaya left Mexico City for Oaxaca, where he would remain for the rest of his life, working as a chaplain until the *maestro* position was vacated in 1745. Upon his death, Zumaya's manuscripts were preserved in Oaxaca, while the library he had compiled in Mexico City is now kept at the Museo Virreinal. In addition to the stage works, he composed several Mass settings, a Lamentation, and numerous motets. He was especially prolific in *villancicos*, which display his knack for capturing the rhythms of indigenous dialect-inflected Spanish. He was never published during his lifetime, and his works remained largely unknown outside of Mexico.

Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco (1644, Villarrobledo – 1728, Lima) was cantor at the cathedral in Lima and composed sacred music and what is considered the first opera written in the Americas: *La púrpura de la rosa*, which premiered in Lima in 1701. In 1656, he entered the service of Pedro Antonio Fernández de Castro Andrade y Portugal, Count of Lemos. It is likely that, in the early 1660s, Torrejón traveled to Naples with his patron, before accompanying on his trip to America in 1667. He was captain of the Casa de Armas of Lima and mayor of Cachapoyas, in northern Peru. Despite the fact that he was not a member of the clergy, he was appointed *maestro de capilla* of the Cathedral of Lima in 1676. Torrejón wrote liturgical music and a large collection of *villancicos*. He won greatest acclaim for his opera *La púrpura de la rosa* with libretto by Calderón de la Barca, performed in celebration of the first anniversary of the reign of Philip V.

Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla (1590 Málaga – 1664) was born in Spain but moved to Puebla, Mexico in 1620. "New Spain" was at that time a viceroyalty of Spain that included what we now know as Mexico, Guatemala, the Philippines, and other parts of Central America and the Caribbean. Padilla is one of the more important composers represented in the manuscripts in Puebla and the Hackenberry collection (Chicago). He worked at Puebla, which was in its day a larger religious center than Mexico City; he was appointed *maestro de capilla* there in 1628. The majority of his vast output (over 700 pieces are extant) include sacred motets, frequently for double choir in the Renaissance *stile antico*, as well as sacred *villancicos* with accompaniments for organ or stringed instruments.

Mateo Flecha (1481, Prades – 1553), known as "El Viejo" to distinguish him from his nephew "El Joven" (a composer of madrigals), was best known for his collection of *ensaladas*, works for four or five voices for the diversion of palace courtiers that frequently mixed languages, published in Prague in 1581. He was music director at La Seu Vella, Lleida for several years before departing for Guadalajara, in the service of Duke Diego Hurtado de Mendoza. He then directed the chapel choir of the Duke of Calabria (Valencia), where several of his works were published in songbooks affiliated with the chapel, including *Cancionero de Uppsala* (1556). Flecha served as *maestro di cappella* at Sigüenza for two years, before

residing at the castle at Arévalo as the teacher of Maria and Joanna, daughters of Philip II of Spain. Towards the end of his life, he became a monk of the Cistercian Order, living at the Poblet Monastery until his death in 1553.

Pedro Bermúdez (1558, Granada – 1605, Puebla) began his musical career as a choirboy in his hometown and later studied composition with Rodrigo de Ceballos at the Capilla Real. He won the title of *maestro de capilla* in Antequera in 1584 before returning to Granada to sing at the Capilla Real. Bermúdez followed newly appointed Cusco Bishop Antonio de la Raya to become the *maestro de capilla* there in 1597. He continued his progress through Latin America to the cathedral of Santiago de Guatemala, where he composed most of his music. His health declined after he departed Guatemala for Puebla, where he died at the age of 47. All of his extant works are sacred choral works for 4 to 8 voices, based on Roman Catholic liturgical texts. Two of his masses survived: *Misa de Bomba*, a parody based on Flecha's *ensalada* "La Bomba," and *Misa de feria*, to be performed during times of penance. The Guatemalan choral codices contain a collection of hymns for vespers, as well as his *Miserere mei* (psalm), two lamentations, and three passions for Holy Week.

Juan Corchado entered the service of the Puebla Cathedral in 1725, where he taught harp at the Colegio de Infantes and composed *villancicos* in the modern style. Apart from his obligations as composer and teacher, little is known about his works apart from those housed in the archives of the Durango and Guatemala Cathedrals, the Conservatorio de las Rosas in Morelia, and the Colección Sánchez Garza in Puebla.

Fray Felipe de la Madre de Dios was born in Lisbon and entered the order of the Mercederian friars in Seville at age 30, where he made his reputation for two decades for his inventive modes (?) and *villancicos* for the *vihuela*, a predecessor of the modern guitar. He soon earned the respect of Joao IV, the king's musician of Portugal. He worked as *maestro de capilla* to King Alfonso VI in the 1660s, after which he returned to Seville. His extant works are scattered throughout Europe, and his most well-known compositions, a set of nine works on the texts of Portuguese poet Violante de Cielo, were written in honor of the 18th birthday of King Alfonso VI and are kept in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, as well as nine romances on metered poems by Francisco Manuel de Melo, which were published in France. 21 works are contained in the Cathedral of Guatemala, where his music was performed for over a century.

Composer **Fray Jerónimo González de Mendoza** was active in Madrid and Seville in the middle of the 17th century, first mentioned by noted composer Diego Pontac, *maestro de capilla* to Grenada in the 1630s. Many of the *villancicos* attributed to González are housed in the Bogotá Cathedral, as well as the archive at the Seminary of San Antonio Abad (Cusco, Peru). The long-form *villancicos* (carols) drew their musical structure from the poetic structure, usually incorporating a chorus; those written for festive occasions such as Christmas incorporated lyrical liturgical texts that captured the joy of the season.

Performer Bios

Jesse Blumberg, baritone

Boston Early Music Festival, Minnesota Opera, American Bach Soloists, Atlanta Opera, Boston Baroque; Pittsburgh Opera; Apollo's Fire, Boston Lyric Opera, Washington National Cathedral; Hawaii Opera Theatre; Artistic Director, Five Boroughs Music Festival.

Patrick Fennig, countertenor

The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys; Early Music New York; Ekmeles Vocal Ensemble; SEM Ensemble; Collectio Musicorum; Musica Sacra New York; Big Apple Baroque; Northwestern University.

Laura Heimes, soprano

Soloist with Voices of Music, ARTEK, Four Nations, Brandywine Baroque, Apollo's Fire, Pittsburgh Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra. Festivals: Carmel Bach, Oregon Bach, Boston, Berkeley, Connecticut, Indianapolis Early Music. Recordings: Dorian, Pro Gloria Musicae, Plectra Music, Sonabilis, Albany, Avian and Zefiro.

Priscilla Herreid, recorder, shawm

GEMAS, Trinity Baroque Orchestra; Piffaro, Handel + Haydn, Shakespeare on Broadway; TENET, Hesperus, Broken Consort, City Musick (UK), Sebastians, NYBI, Dark Horse Consort, Waverly Consort, recorder soloist: Portland Baroque Orchestra.

Christa Patton, harp, winds

Apollo's Fire, The King's Noyse, Toronto Consort, Seattle Baroque Orchestra, Blue Heron, Folger Consort; New York City Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Opera Atelier; musical director and co-director: Baroque Opera Workshop (Queens College); visiting scholar, Rutgers University.

Dongsok Shin, harpsichord/organ

Trinity Baroque Orchestra; Choir of Trinity Wall Street; principal keyboard player of REBEL since 1997; well known as an early keyboard performer, early keyboard technician, and early music recording engineer/producer.

Nell Snaidas, soprano/Co-director, Bishop's Band

Boston Early Music Festival, Tragicomedia, LA Phil, Teatro Massimo, Festival Vancouver, Caramoor, Ex Umbris, El Mundo (Grammy nomination), Apollo's Fire (Guest Co-Director), Bach Collegium San Diego (Guest Director), Translator/Arranger for Alicia Keys (MTV Awards); Faculty: Madison Early Music Festival, NY Continuo Collective; CBC Radio "Leading Voice in Sephardic Music"; Co-Artistic Director of GEMAS: Early Music of the Americas, a Project of Americas Society & GEMS.

Kirsten Sollek, contralto

Soloist: Tafelmusik, Seattle Baroque Orchestra, Bach Collegium Japan, Alarm Will Sound, Ensemble Signal, Minnesota Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, Virginia Symphony, String Orchestra of Brooklyn. Opera: Glyndebourne, Boston Baroque, Teatro Municipal de Santiago de Chile. Festivals: Lufthansa Baroque Music Festival, Carmel Bach, Boston Early Music.

Taylor Ward, baritone

Principal artist: Les Arts Florissants; Collegium Vocale Ghent; Boston Early Music Festival; L'Arpeggiata; Boston Camerata; Bach Collegium Japan; Roomful of Teeth. Recipient: Margot Fassler award; Yale School of Music Alumni Prize; Harriet Hale Wooley Fellowship (2013); Carmel Bach Festival Virginia Best Adams Fellowship; Helpman Award. Director: Lakes Area Music Festival; founding member: Cantata Profana; Academy of Sacred Drama.

Sebastian Zubieta, tenor/conductor

Music Director, Americas Society; Director, Meridionalis; Co-Artistic Director, GEMAS; conferences: LASA, IMS Regional Association for Latin America and the Caribbean, Society for American Music, International Musicological Society; conducting: Wall-to-Wall, Festival de Música Sacra de Quito, Centro de Experimentación del Teatro Colón; commissions: CETC, ICE, Look and Listen.

Omar Morales Abril, musicologist

Director, La Capilla del Valle de la Asunción; publications: *Los villancicos de Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco, Estudio y transcripción, Humor, pericia y devoción: Villancicos en la Nueva España*; research: CENIDIM at the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes de México.