

# **Latin American Choral Music**

What do you know about music from Latin America?

1. Mariachi
2. La cucaracha
3. Shakira

... more recently, “Coco”

1. Alberto Ginastera (O vos omnes)
2. Ariel Ramírez (Misa Criolla)
3. Heitor Villa-lobos (As costureiras)
4. Alberto Grau (kasar mie la gaji)

... “De colores”

... “Mata del anima sola”

What music is out there?

# Colonial Period





A photograph of a church interior during a performance. A large choir of people, mostly women, is seated on a raised platform at the front of the church, holding sheet music and singing. The church has a simple design with a large wooden cross on the wall behind the choir. The lighting is dim, with spotlights illuminating the choir. The foreground shows the backs of several rows of pews, indicating an audience is present.

Angélicas Milicias

by Manuel de Sumaya



**California Missions**



# Mexican Cathedrals (Puebla, Oaxaca, Mexico City)



# Guatemalan and Cuban Cathedrals



# Colombian and Peruvian Cathedrals



# Chiquitos Missions

## Some Colonial Period Composers:

All public domain, many with editions available on CPDL and IMSLP:

- Manuel de Sumaya
- Esteban Salas
- Hernando don Franco
- Francisco López Capillas
- Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco
- Juan de Araujo
- Manuel de Ubeda
- Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

Bonus: SSAT, SSAB, and SST are some of the most common voicings

# **Three Early-Mid 20th-Century Latin American Choral Composers (That You May Not Know)**



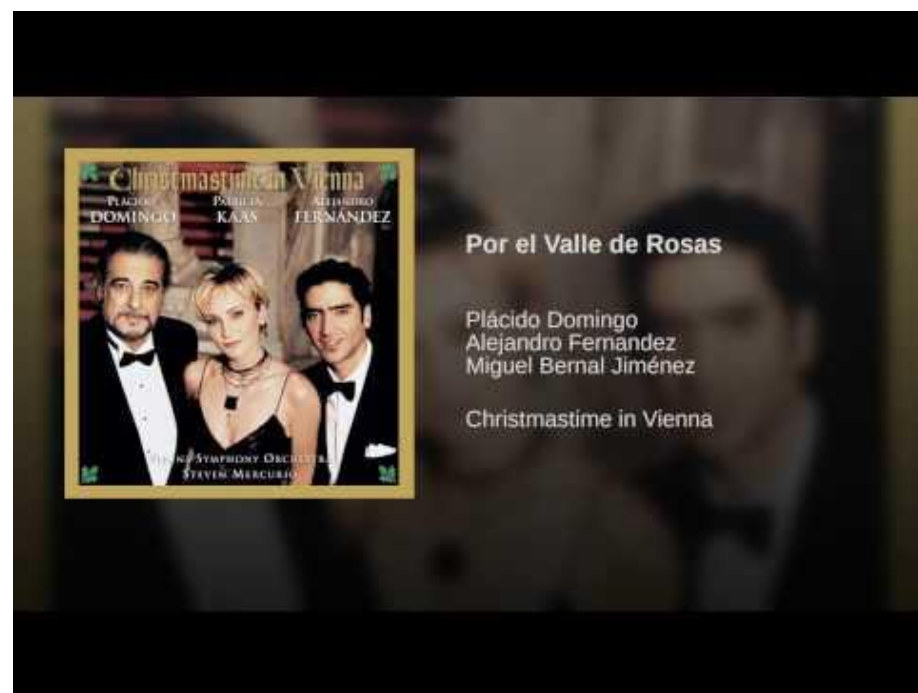
**Miguel Bernal Jiménez**

# Miguel Bernal Jiménez

- Much of his music is public domain or freely available through sacred music publishers and in hymnals
- Most important and prolific Mexican composer for organ and of sacred music of the early 20th century
- Wrote extensively for children's choirs of all levels
- Wrote large liturgical works in a variety of configurations: a cappella, with orchestra, and with organ
- Many of his Christmas carols and service music are mainstays of Mexican church choirs
- Some of his music is in a panmodal, impressionist language and some in a very tonal, romantic language



**Tres antífonas para México**



**Por el valle de las rosas**

## Recommended choral works:

- Ave gratia plena (SATB)
- Por el valle de las rosas (SATB, solo, and organ/orchestra)
- Aleluya (SSA and organ)
- Misa aeternae trinitatis (SATB and organ)
- Misa Guadalupana Juandieguito (SATB, congregation, and organ)
- Antífonas para México (SSA and piano)
- Te deum (SATB and organ)



**Blas Galindo**



# Blas Galindo

- Mexican nationalist style, used elements of indigenous and folk music in his works
- Wrote several large cantatas on secular and patriotic subjects for choir, orchestra, and soloists
- Wrote several part songs for unaccompanied mixed chorus
- Wrote many arrangements of Mexican folk songs and rounds of varying difficulty for elementary school choirs
- His art songs are often performed in Mexico with treble ensembles (unison with piano accompaniment)



## Carlos Guastavino

- Wrote more than 500 songs (many still unpublished.)
- Tonal, lush, romantic, with wonderful piano parts. In the style of Brahms or Schubert.
- Evocative, powerful texts.
- Choral music for all levels and voicings, including advanced mixed chorus, tenor-bass ensembles, and elementary school choirs.



## Indianas (No. 1)



## En los surcos del amor

**Three Established, Living, Latin American Composers  
(Who Are Not Known for Their Choral Music)  
Whose Choral Music You Should Definitely Check Out**



**Leo Brouwer (Cuba)**



A portrait of Arturo Márquez, a man with grey, wavy hair, wearing a dark blue button-down shirt. He is looking slightly to his left with a gentle smile. The background is a blurred night scene of a city street with lights and a red awning above him.

**Arturo Márquez (Mexico)**



**Oswaldo Golijov (Argentina)**





# Latinx Choral Arrangers Frequently Performed by Latin American Choirs

- Conrado Monier (Cuba)
- Ramón Noble (Mexico)
- Liliana Cangiano (Argentina)
- Hugo César de la Vega (Argentina)
- Francisco Núñez (USA)
- Vicente Chavarría (USA)
- Alberto Grau (Venezuela)

Issues you may run into...

# **Differences in Editions & Publishing Practices**

# Final movement of "Navidad Nuestra" by Ariel Ramírez

6  
LA HUIDA

Vilala tucumana  $\text{♩} = 76$   
Slow

Soprano  
Alto  
Tenor  
Bass

Va - mos! on! Va - mos! on! Bu - rri - to a pu - rá! Va - Move  
Move on! Move on! Lit - tle don - key, move on! Move

Piano  
(for rehearsal only)

Small Drum with sticks  
Large Drum with hands

This musical score is for the USA edition of the final movement of "Navidad Nuestra" by Ariel Ramírez. It is titled "LA HUIDA" and features a tempo of "Slow" with a metronome marking of 76. The score is arranged for a vocal quartet (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass), Piano (for rehearsal only), Small Drum with sticks, and Large Drum with hands. The vocal parts have lyrics in Spanish, and the piano part provides harmonic support. The drum parts are marked with "1" and "2" to indicate specific rhythmic patterns.

Edition published in the USA

M.M.  
C.a.  $\text{♩} = 76$

Solista  
S.  
A.  
T.  
B.

Va - mos! Va - mos! Bu - rri - to a pu - rá! Va - mos! Va - mos! Bu -  
- mos! - mos! - mos! - mos! - mos! - mos!

Bombo

This musical score is for the Argentina edition of the final movement of "Navidad Nuestra" by Ariel Ramírez. It is titled "M.M. C.a." and features a tempo of 76. The score is arranged for a vocal quartet (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and Bombo. The vocal parts have lyrics in Spanish, and the bombo part provides rhythmic support. The score is marked with "1" and "2" to indicate specific rhythmic patterns.

Edition published in Argentina

Solistas



Re-yes ha na-ci-do ya  
Pe-dro de tra-u-ca-y Po-mán  
pa-say su mu-la de an-dar  
na-pa no habrá de fal-tar

S.



Tutti  
Sopranos  
top line.

Ah

Ven

A.



SA  
solo group

1. ven-gan an-tes que a-ma-
2. an-tes que na-die lea-
3. con ca-jas y con gui-
4. mien-tras la lu-na Rio-

T.



Tutti Altos  
& tenors

Ven

Ah

# **Mistranslations & Lack of Context**

## Mistranslation of “Son de la Loma” in Cantemus 3, International Music collection which completely changes the meaning of the song:

- Santiago, Cuba misidentified as Santiago, Chile
- “Tierra soberana” mistranslated as “the free land”

### TRANSLATION:

Where could they be from Mother, for I want to learn them?

They are from the hillside and I want to meet them.

Mother, I want to know where those singers are from,

For I find them charming, and want to meet them with their fascinating songs, which I want to learn.

Where could they be from, could they be from Havana [Cuba]?

Could they be from Santiago [Chile] the free land?

They are from the hillside, and they sing on the plains.

You will see Mother, they are from the hillside, and they sing on the plains.

Where could they be from Mother, for I want to learn them.

They are from the hillside, and I want to meet them.

We will see, yes sir.

## **Adding Instruments (When Not Indicated in the Score)**

- Are percussion instruments appropriate for the piece and its context?
- Is guitar or a keyboard accompaniment appropriate for this piece and its context?
- If so, what percussion instruments would be used natively? (bombo legüero, cajón peruano, conga, etc.)

If you can't get it, what is the closest you can come to replicating its sound? ... **“djembe” is almost never the right answer.**

- If so, what strummed string instruments would be used natively? (charango, cuatro, requinto, etc.)

If you can't get it, what is the closest you can come to replicating its sound?



Instrument substitutions:

Mandolin & guitar

Bongos

Piano

Added percussion (clave and maracas)



Traditional instruments:

Charango

Bombo legüero

Zampoñas

No additional percussion

# **Top 10 Diction Issues When Singing in Spanish**

1. Use the correct Spanish variant. **When in doubt, use Neutral Latin American Spanish** (So-called “Mexican” Spanish)
2. Syllable stress matters immensely in Spanish
3. Vowel color does not matter all that much
4. Vowel consistency matters a great deal (much more than color)
5. Do not roll the “r” unnecessarily. It’s somewhat insulting.
6. The “h” sound does not exist in any Spanish variant. Be especially careful of unintended “h” sounds after other consonants (“p” and “k” especially)
7. The schwa does not exist in any Spanish variant.
8. The “z” sound does not exist in any Latin American Spanish variant.
9. Never aspirate the “t”
10. “j” is similar to a German ich-laut, and never an ach-laut or an “h”.

# Online Resources

- Border CrossSing
- Latin American Choral Music
- Voce in tempore
- Indiana University Latin American Music Center
- Asociación Argentina para la Música Coral “America Cantat”
- International Federation for Choral Music: IFCM
- VocalEssence ¡Cantaré!
- CPDL Música Colonial Archive
- Colegio de compositores latinoamericanos de música de arte
- Federación coral del Caribe y Centroamérica

# “La barca de oro”

a Ranchera song by  
Abundio Martínez

(SATB arrangement by  
Ramón Noble)

