

Hermosas y enojadas

Poem by an unknown author

Hermosas y enojadas
lloravan dos estrellas
de cielo de Jacinta
hilo a hilo de perlas

Streams and streams of pearls
cry down from Jacinta's eyes
like two beautiful and angry
stars in the sky

Perlas llora Jacinta
quando se queja
mas que vierte llorando
Riendo muestra

Jacinta cries pearls
when she groans
but the more she cries
the more she shows she's laughing

Recelesa suspira
quexosa se lamenta
que amor no tiene gloria
si no padece pena

Suspicious Jacinta sighs
she groans and laments
for love can have no glory
without pain

Perlas llora Jacinta...

Jacinta cries pearls...

Perlas son animados
pues cadauna dellas
o es parte del alma
o tras si se la lleva

Pearly tears are lively
for each one of them
is either part of the soul
or part of the past, if you take it with you

Perlas llora Jacinta...

Jacinta cries pearls...

Likely originating in the port city of Santander, the Spanish Plague outbreak of 1596-1602 affected Castile more than any other Iberian kingdom. The outbreak reached its peak in 1599 and claimed an estimated half a million Castilian lives during its six-year span. As one might expect, the outbreak disproportionately affected the poor, as better living conditions and an ability to self-isolate offered protection to the wealthy. In 1598, King Philip III ascended to the throne in the Castilian capital of Madrid. An avid music lover, he appointed Mateo Romero as Capellmeister just one month after his coronation.

In 1586, an eleven-year-old Romeo arrived at court from his native Flanders following his father's death. He began his career there as a boy chorister and eventually came to be known as "El Capitan," exemplifying the respect he commanded and the status he enjoyed as the most celebrated musician associated with Phillip III's court. His tenure as Capellmeister lasted until his retirement in 1633, spanning the entirety of Philip III's reign and twelve years of Philip IV's.

Although his work as Capellmeister was exclusively concerned with sacred music, Romero exerted equal influence in the realm of secular music while simultaneously serving as Maestro of Chamber Music. A significant portion of Romero's extant secular chamber works appears in the [Cancionero de la Sablonara](#), named for the copyist Claudio de la Sablonara, who Phillip III appointed in 1599.

The Cancionero de la Sablonara features a select 75 pieces written at court over about two decades, as Sablonara likely finished his compilation circa 1625. Songs in the Cancionero are for 2, 3, or 4 voices and represent a variety of traditional Spanish musical forms (*cancion*, *romance*, *folia*, *villancico*, *seguidilla*, etc.). Unsurprisingly, no composer features more prominently than Mateo Romero, and no genre features more prominently than the *romance*.

The term *romance* refers to a poetic and musical tradition with roots in storytelling. The texts of traditional *romances* tend to elaborate on a particular emotional moment in a story rather than advance its plot. Set to through-composed music, early texts adhered to a strict poetic form, written in octosyllabic quatrains with every other line ending in a rhyming vowel. Though the emotional focus of *romance* texts remained relatively constant, the genre underwent significant structural changes circa 1600. Romero's "Hermosas y enojadas" exemplifies many of these developments.

Like *romances* of its time, "Hermosas y enojadas" does not adhere to the strict poetic structure of earlier texts. Most importantly, it contains an *estribillo*, or refrain, an increasingly prevalent feature introduced around 1550 that became expected by 1600. In its musical setting, the *estribillo* was often more prominent than the verses, as is the case in "Hermosas y enojadas." Set in a contrasting meter, the *estribillo* is more imitative than the verse and contains more musical material despite setting less text. While "Hermosas y enojadas" appears in the original manuscript with eight verses, we chose to record three of them that we believe best convey the song's theme: love is both pleasure and pain.

Ashley Mulcahy & James Perretta

Sources

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