

Esta Noche de Purim

a Sephardic Jewish Copla
for Choir SATB

arr. Sarah Riskind

Background Information

The Sephardim are descended from Jews who settled in modern-day Greece and other Balkan countries, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt after being expelled from Spain and Portugal in the 1490s. Due to persecution in the 20th century, many Sephardic Jews now live in Israel, France, the Americas, and other parts of the world. The term “Sephardic” is often used to represent all Jews who are not Ashkenazi, or traditionally Yiddish-speaking Jews from German or Eastern European background, but there are also groups that fall into neither category.

Because Sephardic music was not notated until the 20th century, it is difficult to discern the age of most Sephardic melodies. Most Sephardic music reflects the Ottoman and Arabic cultures of the Mediterranean more than the Iberian peninsula, except for influences in the 20th century and beyond. Commercial artists and composers have interpreted Sephardic music in a range of styles, but it is important to understand that the harmonies, vocal timbres, instrumentation, and rhythms usually create more of a reimagining than a literal presentation of tradition.

“Esta Noche de Purim” is a *copla*, a genre of strophic songs often sung or led by men focused on themes of Jewish history and culture. There are often many verses, but singers can choose from them and change the order; this arrangement uses four verses found in several different recordings. The text has been printed often, beginning in 1798, but many variations of the melody exist. The main melodic source for this arrangement is a recording on Avner Perez’s Maale Adumim Institute database, accessible at <http://folkmasa.org/avshir/shirp.php?mishtane=953>, sung by the Moroccan woman Marcelle Cohen. Other recordings of this ballad are located in record numbers 2226, 943, 2423, 2443, 1403, 2003, and 2444, all from the Moroccan traditions. The refrain melody most closely resembles that in record 2444.

Performance suggestions:

- Experiment with a brighter, less bel canto vocal technique, using the recordings as a model. The register is intentionally low for the sopranos and altos in order to make this possible.
- The heterophonic verse at rehearsal letter D is intended to capture the sound of a group of singers who know slightly different variations of the melody. Instead of singing in voice parts, performers should be divided evenly between the four staves.

Text

The Judeo-Spanish language spoken by the Sephardic Jews is most commonly called Ladino, but other regional names include Spaniol, Djudezmo, Djudeo-spanyol, and haketia (Moroccan Judeo-Spanish). Since it was originally written in the Hebrew Rashi script, there are now many spelling systems and countless dialectic variations in pronunciation and vocabulary. This arrangement primarily uses Cohen's pronunciation, with the spelling system from the Ladino magazine *Aki Yerushalayim* that is used on the popular online discussion group Ladinokomunita (<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/Ladinokomunita/info>).

Pronunciation Guide:

- Vowels: same as Spanish
- Consonants: same as Spanish, except:
 - z is voiced, as in English
 - j is ʒ, as in French "jour"
 - g is a hard g, as in English "gate"
 - s at the end of a word is voiced, as in z

This *copla* celebrates the Jewish holiday of Purim, which commemorates the heroic actions of the Jewish Queen Esther of Persia and her cousin Mordechai. They prevented the King's adviser Haman from killing the Jewish people, which is a cause for rejoicing through food and drink. This holiday usually falls in February or March.

Translation

1. Esta noche de Purim No duermen los alhalwim, Haziendo las alhalwas Para las despozadas.	This Purim night The sweets makers do not sleep They are making sweets, for the newlyweds.
REFRAIN: Vivas tu, i viva yo, I vivan todos los judios. Viva la reina Ester Ke tanto plaser nos dio.	REFRAIN: Long live you, long live me, Long live all the Jews. Long live Queen Esther Who gave us so much pleasure.
2. Haman el mamzer Mucho mal kizo hazer A Mordehay el judio En los dias de Purim.	Haman, upon waking, Had much to do To Mordechai the Jew On the days of Purim.
3. Mordehay manda i dise Todo judio ke se avise En Adar katorse i kinse Mire mucho de beber.	Mordechai ordered and said That every Jew must pay attention And on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month of Adar, to drink a lot
4. No dejis komer peskado, Kocho, frito, ni asado Aunke vos kostara karo En la noche de Purim.	Do not fail to eat fish, Cooked, fried, nor grilled Although it will be costly On the night of Purim

First verse and refrain:

The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times

Translation by Marilyn Mayo and Nancy Wiener

Third verse:

Susana Weich-Shahak

“The Traditional Performance of Sephardic Songs” in *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish Music*, ed. Joshua S. Walden

Second and fourth verses: Sarah Riskind

Esta Noche de Purim

Moroccan Sephardic Copla for Purim
arr. Sarah Riskind

With celebration ♩ = 100

SOPRANO *mf*
Hm

ALTO *mf*
Hm

TENOR

BASS *f*
solo

4 Es - ta no - che de Purim... en los al - hal-wim,

S.

A.

T.

B. *f* tutti

7 ha - zien - do las al - hal-wa... pa - ra las des - po - za - das. Vi - vas tu, y vi - va yo, y

S.

A.

T.

B.

vi - van to - dos los ju - dios. Vi - va la rei - na Es - ter, que tan - to pla - ser nos dio.

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23 *mf*

S. Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos

A. *mf tutti* Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser

T. *mf* Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos

B. *mf tutti* Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser

27 **C** Hand clapping

S. dio.

A. *f* No de-jis ko-mer pes-ka-do, ko-cho, fri-to ni a-sa-do aun-ke vos ko-sta-ra ka-ro en la no-che de Pu-rim.

T. *f* dio. Hand clapping

B. *f* No de-jis ko-mer pes-ka-do, ko-cho, fri-to, ni a-sa-do aun-ke vos ko-sta-ra ka-ro en la no-che de Pu-rim.

31 *f tutti*

S. Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

A. Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

T. *f tutti* Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

B. *f* Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to-dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

Heterophony:
Singers equally divided between these staves,
regardless of voice part (Optional: use soloists)

35

S. *f* **D** Es-ta no-che de Pu-rim no duer-men los al-hal-wim,

A. Es-ta no-che de Pu-rim no duer-men los al-hal-wim,

T. Es-ta no-che de Pu-rim no duer-men los al-hal-wim,

B. Es-ta no-che de Pu-rim no duer-men los al-hal-wim,

38

S. ha-zien-do las al-hal-was pa-ra las des-po-za-das.

A. ha-zien-do las al-hal-was pa-ra las des-po-za-das.

T. ha-zien-do las al-hal-was pa-ra las des-po-za-das.

B. ha-zien-do las al-hal-was pa-ra las des-po-za-das.

Return to voice parts

p Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y

p Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y

mp Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y

41

S. vi- van to - dos los ju- dios. Vi - va la rei - na Es - ter, que tan - to pla - ser nos dio.

A. vi- van to - dos los ju- dios. Vi - va la rei - na Es - ter, que tan - to pla - ser nos dio.

T. vi- van to - dos los ju- dios. Vi - va la rei - na Es - ter, que tan - to pla - ser nos dio.

B. vi- van to - dos los ju- dios. Vi - va la rei - na Es - ter, que tan - to pla - ser nos dio.

44 *f* *tutti* *ff*

S. Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to - dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei-na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

A. *f* *tutti* *ff*

A. Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to - dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei-na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

T. *f* *tutti* *ff*

T. Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to - dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei-na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

B. *f* *tutti* *ff*

B. Vi-vas tu, y vi-va yo, y vi-van to - dos los ju-dios. Vi-va la rei-na Es-ter, que tan-to pla-ser nos dio.

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