
VOCAL ESSENCE  Music Press



Lilia Vázquez Kuntze
Nido de Amor

MUSIC RESOURCE GUIDE
VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! Series



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Nido de Amor Music Resource Guide

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Nido de Amor (Love Nest)

by Lilia Vázquez Kuntze

Difficulty Level

Nido de Amor (Unison Voices + keyboard, optional glockenspiel) uses a very accessible harmonic language that allows a variety of melodic shapes and intervals to remain singable by even the youngest of children. While the range as indicated below might appear intimidating, all the phrases begin in the mid-range and then venture into the lower and higher ends, making the piece an excellent one for building vocal flexibility for elementary-age choirs.

Range (Unison Voices)



Composer's Note

I love to work with kids. The reason for this is the deep love I have for them, because in my relationship with them I have experienced the world as they do, being full of innocence, spontaneity, love and joy. Kids also have a unique capacity to invent and dream ... something that we could learn again as adults.

The melodies and texts are written for children and reflect my concern for recovery of balance and well-being of our Planet Earth. A common desire of mankind has been to conquer the Earth, but we have learned again and again that it is impossible when faced with disasters that do not respect borders and peoples! We need to align ourselves with the Earth by taking care of our resources and being aware of the many forms of animal and plant life that are becoming extinct. Planet Earth is a living thing that feeds us every day, that holds us and gives life to all who live.

Mexico is a country with ancient wisdom traditions that emphasize knowledge of laws and natural cycles that govern life on the planet and the human being. My experience with the tradition of "Tezcatlipoca" (God of Pre-Hispanic Cosmogony) has made me reiterate my position on the importance of building a livelihood free of environmental pollution and the threat of global warming. It's amazing how the knowledge of our wise ancestors contains various forms of healing that have been passed down from generation to generation and contribute to the restoration and holistic healing for human life and the Earth. Moreover this knowledge helps us to perceive the unity of existence, and recognize ourselves as the children of the Earth and thus as brothers.

We live in a surprising and wonderful world in terms of technological and scientific advances. It seems that every culture has a different and complementary knowledge, and that if we contribute to the work of rescuing our world, to join our different talents and cultures, that someday we might come to see the expression of a beautiful reality on our Planet Earth, our only home. My sincere desire in this music is to convey to children my feelings of warmth, brotherhood and love for our beautiful Earth, feelings which come from my heart in the songs that I write for them.



Composer Biography:

Lilia Vázquez Kuntze



Lilia Vázquez Kuntze studied composition in Europe with Iannis Xenakis, Franco Donatoni and Diego Feinstein, obtaining degrees in Music Theory and Composition in Germany. During this time, Lilia arranged piano reductions for music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart that was published under the Barenreiter label. Lilia has taken composition courses with Leo Brouwer, Rodolfo Halffter, Alcides Lanza, Włodzimierz Kotonoski and electronic music with Raúl Pavón. Her instructors in Mexico include Mario Lavista, Héctor Quintanar and Federico Ibarra. After moving back to Mexico, Vázquez won first prize in the Mexico National Contest Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz with the work entitled *To Christ the Blessed Sacrament, Communion Day*. She also received the Coatlicue Award granted by the Collective of Women in Music, International Coordinator of Women in Art. Her works include orchestra, choral, chamber, and piano repertoire, and many have been performed in major festivals in France, Germany, the United States, Italy, Cuba and Mexico. Lilia Vázquez Kuntze served as a resident composer in the VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! community engagement program, working with elementary-age students in the Twin Cities in 2010-2011.

Nido de Amor (Love Nest)

Text and Translation

Es un nido de amor
Pían ya las crías
Mamá pájaro llegó
Las atiende ya

*It is a nest of love
The chicks are chirping
Mother bird has come
She cares for them now*

Y con gran ternura
Pico a pico a limentó
Las pequeñas aves
Que pronto van a volar

*And with great tenderness
She feeds them one by one
The tiny birds
That will soon fly away*

Salta pronto de tu nido
Aletea muy veloz
Porque el viento está contento
Y contigo va a jugar
—Lilia Vázquez Kuntze

*Fly from your nest soon
Beat your wings quickly
For the wind is happy
And will play with you.
—Translation by Katie Villaseñor*

Pronunciation Guide

VOWELS

a – [ah] father
e – [eh] or [ey*] egg or they
* [ay] is also used for the same sound imitating
common English words (kay, day, say)
i – [ee] machine
o – [oh] or [ah] open or off
u – [oo] rule
y – [ee] heavy

VOWEL COMBINATIONS

ai, ay – [ai] side
au – [au] found
ei, ey – [ēi] they
eu – [ēu] may-you
ie – [yeh] yes
oi, oy – [oy] boy
ua – [wa] water
ue – [wē] wait

CONSONANTS

c – [k] before consonant, a, o or u or [s] before e or i
ch – [ch] chill
g – [g] get
j – [h] hot
ll – [y] yarn
ñ – [ni] onion
q – [k] (u that follows is always silent!) cadence
r – [ř] flipped with tip of tongue
rr – [řř] rolled/trilled with tip of tongue
s – [z] before consonants b, d, g, l, m, n,
otherwise [s]
y – [y] yes
z – [s] yes

Nido de Amor Pronunciation/Translation Guide

[ehs oon nee-doh dey ah-mohř pee-ahn ya lahs křee-ahs]
Es un nido de amor Pían ya las crías
(It-is a nest of love chirping now the chicks)

[mah-mah pah-hah-řoh yey-goh lahs ah-tyehn-dey ya]
Mamá pájaro llegó Las atiende ya
(Mother bird has-come them she-cares-for now)

[ee kohn gřahn tehř-noo-řah pee-koh ah pee-koh ah-lee-mehn-toh]
Y con gran ternura Pico a pico alimentó
(And with great tenderness one by one she-feeds-them)

[lahs pey-kwey-niahs ah-veys kwey přahn-toh vahn ah voh-lahř]
Las pequeñas aves Que pronto van a volar
(The tiny birds That soon will to fly)

[sahl-tah přahn-toh dey too nee-doh ah-ley-tey-ah moo-ee vey-lohs]
Salta pronto de tu nido Aletea muy veloz
(Fly-off soon from your nest Beat-your-wings very quickly)

[pohř-keh ehl vyehn-toh ehs-tah kohn-tehnt ee kohn-tee-goh vah ah hoo-gahř]
Porque el viento esta content Y contigo va a jugar
(For the wind is happy And with-you it will play.)

Nido de Amor: Musical Analysis

Form:

While the phrases remain consistently four-measures with each eight-measure section of music containing two obvious antecedent/consequent melodic shapes, there is no repetition of material in this piece. Rather, the harmonic centers serve as a kind of A (Eb Major: m.7-14) B (c minor: m. 21-29) A' (Eb Major: m.30-37) + coda (Eb Major: m.38-end) framework.

Melody:

While it is continually new melodic material throughout the piece, each four-measure phrase begins in the middle of the vocal range and then creates a variety of beautiful shapes using a relatively mature vocabulary of intervallic relationships while remaining firmly within the diatonic language.

Harmony:

The Eb Major sections (A, A' and coda) consist of a simple I-IV-V language while the B section in c minor quickly cycles through a variety of secondary key areas with each four-bar phrase (c minor, Bb major, g minor, F major).

Rhythm:

While the piano accompaniment contributes forward motion through its continuous flowing eighth-notes, the unison voices utilize almost exclusively quarter notes with half-notes at the end of every two measures. Rhythmic interest, then, exists exclusively in the increasing tempos of the A' section and coda.

Texture/Timbre:

The opening section is framed by a piano introduction and interlude notable for the effusive trills and other bird-like ornamentation that continues as accompaniment to the opening A section, pulls back during the B section and returns in the A' section adding staccato textures to add to the lively tempo change and textual images. Finally, the coda includes an optional glockenspiel to double the voices in their bird call imitations that adds a delightful color and highlights the joyful, child-like wonder of the happy wind playing with the birds.

Overview

Mexico ranks tenth in the world for number of bird species and even includes the eagle on its flag. In her notes (see p. 3), the composer emphasizes her wish for this piece to inspire awareness and action in caring for the birds and all of the natural world. Observing the behavior of nesting birds, building a nest or gathering nesting materials give tangible meaning to the words “Nest of Love” (*Nido de Amor*).

Objectives

Students will:

- Encounter birds in their communities – urban, suburban or rural
- Make, record and analyze observations about nesting bird behavior
- Identify and gather appropriate nesting materials
- Create and share those materials with wildlife



Activity One – Find Nests!

1. Look for bird nests, observing their location, shapes, sizes, materials, and even the appearance and/or sounds of the birds living in those nests (trees, yes, but also signs, stoplights, bridges). Students could make these discoveries on a class nature walk or be asked to find bird nests around their homes on walks with their family.

Note: Make sure to remind students not to touch eggs or baby birds.

2. Ask students to record their findings — with words or pictures, perhaps with adult assistance — so they can remember the types and locations of these nests and share their discoveries with their fellow students.

3. After a few days since the initial observations, have students review their original work and then revisit those locations to see if anything has changed: eggs hatched, nest size or shape evolved, baby birds flown away, etc.

Extension Idea:

Make your observations officially part of the scientific community at <<http://nestwatch.org/>>.

Activity Two – Help the Birds Build a Nest!

1. Discuss the purpose of nests – why do birds build them? (Protect eggs and baby birds from the hard ground, temperature changes, predators, rain/snow/sun — the same reasons we humans live inside!)
2. Ask students to identify materials birds use to make nests (utilize observations in Activity One if possible) and collect those materials together as a class or have students bring in a few items from home (twigs, leaves, grass, moss, stems, spider webs, feathers, etc).

Option One – Share Your Work

3. Place the materials in a mesh bag, shallow tray, bird feeder or even in a small pile where birds will see it and check on your materials to see if they have been used!

Extension Idea:

Encourage students to think of other items that might work for either the exterior structure (dental floss, broom bristles, yarn, popsicle sticks, toothpicks, cotton swabs) or the interior lining (shredded paper, cotton balls, even their own hair!) and share those with the birds near their homes.



Option Two – Build Your Own Nest

4. Using mud (or craft supplies like glue, tape, or string), build the outer structure of the nest using the rougher materials, then line the nest with the softer materials.
5. Display the nests indoors in pizza boxes or other containers or share them with the local birds by placing them in tree branches, building crevices or other potential nesting locations.

Note: *Avoid any materials that would be harmful to birds (chemically treated grass, string-like items longer than 3 inches, plastic or nylon, fishing wire, etc).*

Performance Ideas: *Nido de Amor*

Expand and enhance *Nido de Amor* with these performance ideas that will bring the poem to life visually, dramatically and aurally adding to students' comprehension of the poem and appreciation for the composer's sensitive musical setting.

It's a Bird! It's a Worm! It's a Nest of Love! — Visual Performance

Connect with a visual arts teacher or other crafts-oriented adults and gather materials for students to create puppets that depict the characters in the poem for a beautiful and evocative experience for both students and audience.

1. Read the poem together with students and ask them to identify the puppets that will be needed to “tell” the story: baby bird, parent bird, cloud [or other representation of wind], worm or other food, even a nest — all of which could be expanded to involve multiple students in each aspect.
2. Create items and have students choreograph movements that tell the story during the piano interludes of the piece as well as during the bird call section at the end.

Baby Steps: Dramatic Performance

If the piece is being prepared with several separate groups that will come together in performance, the piece can be made easier if different groups represent the different parts of the poem, creating a drama of sorts.

1. Read the poem together with students and discuss the different characters the poem includes: baby birds, mama bird, wind.
2. Display the poem and visually mark which lines should be assigned to each “role” — sing and play the music for students (or listen to the mp3 recording available at the VocalEssence Music Press website — www.VocalEssenceMusicPress.org) and see if the music seems to match up with the assigned lines or even change between characters, suggesting a particular emotion (and facial expression) for each role.
3. Assign groups their musical lines, perhaps separating them in the performance space so the effect is obvious to both performers and audience.

Suggested roles and musical phrase assignments:

Baby birds: m.7-10, 25-28

Mama/Parent birds: m.11-14, 21-24 (optional: m.30-33)

Wind: m.30-37

All: 38-end

Percussion and More: Aural Performance

The composer calls for optional glockenspiel to double the voices from m. 38-end. Expand this idea to involve more students in the added instrumentation.

1. Have students describe bird calls, songs or other sounds, listening to them together either outside if seasonally appropriate or using recorded resources.
2. Ask students to suggest instruments that could imitate bird sounds they have heard.

Expansion idea:

Play excerpts of pieces where composers have tried to imitate birds (Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, multiple works by Messiaen, Ravel's *Oiseaux tristes*, Sondheim's *Green Finch and Linnet Bird* to name just a few) and discover together what different kinds of instruments they thought worked best.

3. Add additional instruments to the coda section such finger cymbals, triangle, light brush on suspended cymbal, windchimes.

Expansion idea:

Invite a flute player to come in and demonstrate both often-used bird sounds: the trill (used extensively in the piano part of *Nido de Amor*) and flutter-tongue (produced using the same technique as rolling your "r," or "rr" in the Spanish language, utilized in the vocal part of *Nido de Amor*).

4. Explore the composer's piano part: how did she imitate bird sounds?

Create Your Own Nest of Words!

People who live in Mexico did not originally speak Spanish. They spoke all kinds of different languages depending on where they lived and which tribe they belonged to. When explorers came to the Americas from Europe, however, they brought the Spanish language (and Portuguese language) with them. Now most Mexicans speak Spanish, but it is not the official language of Mexico — 68 other languages are also used in Mexico!

The poem of *Nido de Amor* is in Spanish and it has many words that look like or sound like English words. Draw lines to connect Spanish and English words that mean the same thing to create your own *nido de palabras* — nest of words!

	IS	THE CHICKS
Mom	NEST	TENDERNESS
GREAT		ONE BY ONE
HAPPY (CONTENT)		SOON
AMOR		LOVE
PRONTO		CONTENTO
PICO A PICO		GRAN
TERNURA		MAMÁ
LAS CRÍAS		ES
	NIDO	

El mensaje de la *Nido de Amor*: The message of *Nest of Love*

¿Por qué? — Why did the composer write *Nido de Amor*?

Have you ever thought about why a poet or a composer chooses to create a poem or piece of music? What are they thinking about? What are they trying to tell their audience?



Lilia Vázquez Kuntze loves children. She also loves the Planet Earth. She wrote this piece to express her love for both and connect them together, hoping that children might be inspired to solve the problems facing animals, plants, pollution and more.

¿Qué pasa con México? — *What about Mexico?*

Sometimes a composer tries to connect their composing to very old ideas from their country, from their religion, or from their family. If you were going to write a poem or a piece of music, what would you use as inspiration?

Lilia Vázquez Kuntze told us that when she composed *Nido de Amor*, she was thinking of Mexico's traditions about taking care of our world. In fact, she tells us about a god of the ancient Aztec culture, Tezcatlipoca, that reminded people about the amazing world we live in and how we are all connected to each other: animals, plants, humans, stars, wind, water and air. So singing *Nido de Amor* can remind us that the birds are our brothers and sisters and that we can help make our whole planet a nest of love.

