



Jésus López Moreno  
**Cantate Domino**

MUSIC RESOURCE GUIDE

¡Cantaré! Series

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## Cantate Domino

### Music Resource Guide

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# Cantate Domino

Jésus López Moreno (b.1971)

## Difficulty Level

*Cantate Domino* (SA + keyboard) uses a very traditional harmonic and melodic language that singers of many ages will find accessible. The range of the soprano part in particular lies high enough to lend itself best to middle-school girls, high-school women, or even adult female voices while the alto part could be handled by all of those groups and even mid-to-late elementary-age students if a mixed-age group ensemble is a possibility. However, the part-writing is almost exclusively parallel harmonies and thus might require the older, more independently capable voices. The call-and-response refrain (m.15-22, etc) could work well with a slightly younger group that is just beginning to sing in parts; they could perform the rest of the piece in unison (substituting m.15-22 for the final refrain m.72-79 and adjusting the coda according to the capabilities of your singers).



## Composer's Note

This piece was written in 1996 for the Children's Choir that I founded, Cantate Domino. This piece has been recorded by several Mexican choirs and has been sung by almost all of the children's choirs in México. It was also used as an anthem for the choral events at the Inmaculada Concepción in the city of Morelia, Michoacán.

## Composer Biography

Serving as artistic director of the children's choir at Valle de Chalco in the Estado de México and the principal organist of the Cathedral Metropolitan in Mexico City, Jesús López Moreno has extensive experience working with school-age children. His compositions for children's choir have been featured on several recordings throughout Mexico, and he recently won a national children's choir composition contest organized by Conaculta, the National Council for Culture and the Arts in Mexico. He has also composed works for organ, choir, baroque orchestra, and harpsichord as well as a concerto for organ and orchestra.

He was a member, and later acting director, of the Niños Cantores de Morelia. He founded the Cantate Domino children's choir of the Parroquia Del Espiritu in Ecatepec Edo Mex and conducted the children's choir at the Cantorum school of Mexico. Jesús graduated from the Conservatorio de las Rosas de Morelia with a specialty in composition, and studied organ at the Antique Mexican Music Academy for Organs and the National School of Music of the National Autonomous University of México.



*Metropolitan Cathedral in Mexico City, where López serves as principal organist.*

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## Text/Translation

Cantad al Señor porque es grande,  
Cantad al Señor, porque es bueno,  
Cantad, cantad, cantad, cantad al Señor.

*Sing to the Lord for He is great,  
Sing to the Lord for He is good.  
Sing, sing, sing, sing to the Lord.*

Coros celestes cantad alabanzas  
Venid entonemos un cántico nuevo  
al Señor, al Señor.

*Celestial choirs sing praise.  
Come let us sing in harmony  
A new song to the Lord.*

Mientras tambores, trompetas y címbalos  
Van resonando al compás de una misma canción.  
Aleluya, aleluya.

*While drums, trumpets and cymbals  
Resound to the beat of one same song.  
Hallelujah, hallelujah.*

—*Jésus López Moreno*

—*Translation by Katie Villaseñor*



*Jesus López rehearses with young singers from Adams Elementary School in St. Paul, MN (above) and the Latino Children's Choir (right) as they prepare for the VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! Community Concert in May 2010.*



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# Musical Analysis of Cantate Domino

**Form:** The form repeats the entire text twice with an instrumental introduction (m.1-10) and interlude (m.36-45) to divide the statements; these instrumental passages are identical. Each iteration of the text can be divided into two sections — A (m.11-22, m.46-57) and B (m.23-36, m.58-71). The A section sets the first strophe of the text in two distinct phrases: lines 1 and 2 in identical two bar phrases (four bars total); while the final repetitious petition is set in a call-and-response pattern twice with slight variations. Meanwhile the B section sets the other two strophes of the text with each strophe receiving almost identical melodic and harmonic treatment, with the addition of the Aleluya text to close out the text. The piece closes by repeating the call-and-response pattern from the A section but shifts the ranges so the altos now sing what the sopranos had before and the sopranos sing the altos' material transposed up an octave with a slight variation. Finally, a brief coda sets the word, "Aleluya" twice.

**Melody:** Melodic material is almost completely diatonic in e harmonic minor with the occasional D natural when the harmonies have shifted into the relative major and the even more occasional passing tone between A and B (A#). Scales make up the majority of the melodic material in the instrumental sections, while the choral sections make ample use of repeated notes, conjunct motion and sequencing patterns that make it very accessible and engaging for singer and audience.

**Harmony:** Instrumental and A sections are firmly in e minor, while the B section begins each phrase in G major and cadences on B at the end of each phrase with the "Aleluya" bringing us finally back to e minor with a brief B-pedal tone. The predominance of parallel thirds and sixths in the voice parts gives the piece a sweetness and folk character that hints at indigenous Mexican musical traditions.

**Rhythm:** Allegro, dotted quarter = 76; compound duple-meter feel (6/8) with brief appearances of 9/8.

**Texture/Timbre:** Transparent texture in instrumental sections (in piano reduction, but strings/organ orchestration fleshes out the implied harmonies with repeated eighths in inner strings m.3-4, 7-8, etc). Prominent and active bass line reminiscent of Baroque continuo texture especially paired with the two-treble voices can even conjure up trio-sonata aural images. Chamber music, light vocal quality, detached articulations, motoric rhythmic intensity and other Bach-like performance qualities can all be applied to great effect in this piece. Mostly the accompaniment doubles the voices (or obviously outlines the parts) with two notable exceptions: in the second A section the accompaniment returns to the scale-passages of the introduction/interlude during the call-and-response phrase; and — more importantly — the first entrance of the choir after the introduction and interlude is completely unaccompanied. This dramatic shift in texture places the voices directly in the spotlight and does require an absolutely solid confidence in the initial harmonies and part independence.

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# Using Cantate Domino in a Liturgical Worship Setting

The text of *Cantate Domino* (written by the composer) echoes phrases from very familiar psalms:

## Psalm 96

<sup>1</sup>O sing unto the LORD a new song: sing unto the LORD, all the earth.

## Psalm 98

<sup>1</sup>O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvelous things.

## Psalm 150

<sup>1</sup>Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power.

<sup>2</sup>Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness.

<sup>3</sup>Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp.

<sup>4</sup>Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

<sup>5</sup>Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.

<sup>6</sup>Let everything that hath breath praise the LORD. Hallelujah.

In liturgical traditions, psalms presented in worship often are paired with an antiphon or musical response that frames and illuminates the central theme(s) of the psalm text itself. Pairing the anthem *Cantate Domino* with the Brazilian folk hymn, “Cantad al Señor” as a congregational antiphon of sorts would be a musically seamless (both in e minor and are in triple meters) and participatory affirmation of the key, text, and religious intent. “Cantad al Señor” is included in many recent hymnals including *With One Voice*, *The Presbyterian Hymnal*, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, *Gather Comprehensive* and more. Using only the first verse might simplify and streamline (not to mention drive home that central theme of “Sing!”) the liturgical shape and open up the possibility of the congregation singing in both English and Spanish.

Psalms 96, 98, 150 and others with similar themes appear in the revised common lectionary many times, but even using this anthem (with or without the congregational antiphon/hymn response) as a hymn of praise, introit, offering/offertory or post-communion canticle/closing hymn would be appropriate.

Another opportunity for highlighting the Mexican culture and traditions in your worship service might be to perform this piece on or near dates that honor Mexican saints or feast days, particularly:

November 23 – Miguel Augustin Pro (Mexican Jesuit priest, martyred 1927)

December 9 – Our Lady of Guadalupe and Juan Diego (one of Mexico’s most revered religious icons)

December 16-24 – Los Posadas (nine-day festival of processions, caroling, prayer and fellowship)

## Cantad al Señor – Brazilian Folk Hymn

**Tune Excerpt** (traditional Brazilian):



**Text Excerpt** (originally Portuguese, Spanish and English translations available):

Cantai ao Senhor um cantico novo,  
cantai ao Senhor um cantico novo,  
cantai ao Senhos um cantico novo,  
cantai ao Senhor, cantai ao Senhor.

Cantad al Señor un cantico nuevo,  
cantad al Señor un cantico nuevo,  
cantad al Señr un cantico nuevo,  
cantad al Señor, cantad al Señor.

O sing to the Lord, O sing God a new song,  
O sing to the Lord, O sing God a new song,  
O sing to the Lord, O sing God a new song,  
O sing to the Lord, O sing to the Lord.

### Hymnal Appearances:

Church Hymnary, Fourth Edition #126  
Evangelical Lutheran Worship #822  
Gather Comprehensive #526  
Halle Halle: We Sing the World Round #16  
Lutheran Service Book #808  
Presbyterian Hymnal #472

Renew! #74  
Songs for Life #17  
Sing! A New Creation #224/5  
Sing With Me #41  
Worship & Rejoice #15  
With One Voice #795

## Musical Element Classroom Activities

### Text (Language)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| - <i>Coros celestes</i> (celestial chorus)  | - <i>cantad alabanzas</i> (sing praise)          |
| - <i>Venid entonemos</i> (come let us sing in harmony)                                | - <i>un cántico nuevo</i> (a new song)           |
| - <i>Mientras tambores, trompetas y címbalos</i> (while drums, trumpets, and cymbals) |  |
| - <i>Van resonando al compás</i> (resound to the beat)                                | - <i>de una misma canción</i> (of one same song) |

Nothing helps brains process, memorize, and internalize text better than a word-by-word analysis. The four most “wordy” lines of *Cantate Domino* have beautifully rich images that are not solely religious in tone/content.



- Have students illustrate (draw, paint, etc.) one of the images from these lines.
- Display the pictures in the order of the text where students can see them as they rehearse the piece, creating a “visual song” of sorts, a musical mural.
- Art teachers could be enlisted to integrate this project in their own curriculum, perhaps using it as an opportunity to explore traditional Mexican artists, artistic materials or style.
- If such an investment of time and energy is made, these artistic efforts could be displayed at the concert in the lobby, concert program or bulletin covers, or select images could be scanned and projected while the song is being performed so the audience can benefit from the multisensory interpretation as well.

### Form/Timbre

Repetition and variation are in constant tension in all musical compositions. Composers often use dynamics to navigate an appropriate balance. Develop an awareness about that technique in this piece (and applications of that technique to non-musical situations):

- Ask students to identify the dynamic markings and define them throughout.
- Have students speak the text in rhythm applying — and exaggerating! — dynamic shifts.
- Fun variation: speak all the mp/p sections in a low-pitched voice and the mf/f sections in a high-pitched voice (this can encourage support in upper registers, while the opposite assignment of pitch and dynamic might result in chest-voice shouting).
- If students feel comfortable, have individuals do a dramatic reading of this text or another text (book, poem, etc.) using dynamic and pitch shifts.
- Discuss non-musical examples of repetition of text where different dynamic (or pitch!) levels are used to add emphasis (arguments, reminders/nagging, wake-up calls, affirmative echoes – yes! Yes!!, etc.).
- Ask students to evaluate how pitch or dynamic shifts paired with repetition of text affects the emotional or dramatic impact of the words spoken (or sung).
- Analyze the use of dynamics and pitch change (especially on final refrain) in *Cantate Domino* and what emotional shifts the composer was trying to communicate.



## Rehearsal Activities

### Texture

Combining Baroque style and folk-like simplistic parallel harmonies, López is able to combine his Mexican heritage with the classical training he received at the Conservatorio de las Rosas, the oldest music conservatory in the Americas (founded in 1743). Use this piece as an entry point to understanding the complexity of Mexican history and the many parallels with the history of the United States, particularly in the blending of indigenous, transplanted, and European colonial cultures.



- Begin with listing all the things students know (or think they know) about Mexico — food, arts, geography, industry, festivals, politics, history, wars, pop stars, etc.
- Distribute Mexican history handouts (on pp.11-12) for students to read individually or aloud, asking them to underline/circle/highlight those facts that change their understanding or challenge their stereotypes.
- Discuss similarities between Mexico's history and the history of the United States and ask students to think of (or wonder about, depending on their age-level and sophistication) musical styles in the U.S. that are a blend of indigenous, transplanted, and European influences (blues, jazz, rock and innumerable subgenres of popular music today).
- Play examples of Baroque trio sonatas, arias (any students studying the *26 Italian Songs and Arias*? Have them perform!) or other chamber music of Bach, Handel, Purcell or Vivaldi and discuss timbre, tone, texture and form. Draw connections to the style of *Cantate Domino*.
- Play examples of Mariachi, Norteño and Banda styles of Mexican folk music and discuss the similarities to other, more familiar styles. Can any connections be made to *Cantate Domino*? (Besides the harmonic predilection for parallel thirds and sixths, many mariachi bands have two violins or two trumpets that the two voice parts could be imitating in this piece.)
- Perhaps people are not the only ones with DNA. Ask students to start to hear influences in the music they hear every day — which bands have influenced the emerging artists? Who are the musical influences in their lives? If they were going to write music, what composer would they emulate?
- Extension: Have students improvise or compose a brief piece in the style of their favorite songwriter or performer. Additionally, they could improvise or compose a brief piece as a mash-up imitation of two very different composers.

## Rehearsal Activities

### Timbre

The chamber music quality of *Cantate Domino* lends itself well to alternate instrumentation (like strings and organ in the original version). Exploring new timbres in the accompaniment could inspire new insights into vocal color and vocal production.

- Experiment with different sounds on a synthesizer that might add to the musical satisfaction and style (harpsichord, perhaps?) and those that distract (lush strings, slap bass, etc.).
- Enlist singers to bring their acoustic instruments (flutes, pizzicato cello) or enlist guest instrumentalists to read the relatively independent lines from the keyboard reduction.
- Experiment with different stops on an organ if one is available.
- Discuss how the different colors affect the mood, spirit, and energy of the piece.
- Use this new awareness of this piece's needs to discuss vocal timbre, production, and quality.
- How can voices imitate the “appropriate” tone quality in a healthy, sustainable way? Imitating a flute-like sound can sometimes produce less vocal tension than instructions to sing with a lighter straight-tone or other direct descriptors.



# All About Mexico

Mexico is a country of great diversity. It is about three times the size of Texas and the landscape is as diverse as its people and customs. Mexico is famous for its beaches and tropical resort destinations in addition to its food, music and art.

## Mexico Through the Ages

Mexico, like the United States, has had a chaotic history. Just as the United States was first inhabited by American Indians, Mexico was first inhabited by indigenous people too. The first-known Mexican society, the Olmecs, lived around 1500 B.C.E. That is over 3500 years ago!



Map of Mexico

In 1521, an explorer from Spain, Hernán Cortés, conquered the Aztecs and took over Mexico or what the Spanish called New Spain. Just like the United State's American Indians, when the Spanish arrived, most of Mexico's indigenous population died as a result of violence and disease.

## Mexican Culture

Family is a very important part of Mexican society. Families develop close ties spanning generations and even close family friends become part of the extended family.

Mexico is also well known for its food. Corn, beans and squash are an important part of a traditional Mexican diet. Main dishes are different depending on where a family lives and how much money they have, but popular Mexican dishes include enchiladas, tamales, tortillas, burritos and soft-shell tacos.

Arts and sports are also important in Mexico. Two of Mexico's most famous artists are Frida Kahlo and her husband Diego Rivera. Kahlo is famous for her self-portraits and Rivera is famous for his murals. The best known music is the *ranchero*, which is popular among mariachi bands.

Soccer, or *fútbol* in Spanish, is the most popular sport in the country; Mexico hosted the 1970 and 1986 FIFA World Cups, the biggest soccer tournament in the world. Other popular sports include boxing; baseball; *charreada*, a Mexican style rodeo; bullfighting, also known as *fiesta brava*; and *lucha libre*, or Mexican style professional wrestling.

Depending on where you are, Mexico's landscape can look very different. Northern Mexico is mostly desert and the southern Mexico is covered in lush rainforests and mountains. Mexico even has volcanoes and beautiful beaches where people from all over the world come to visit.

# A History of Mexican Music



Mexican music can be divided into three general periods: **Pre-Hispanic** (200 B.C.E.-1521), **Colonial** (1521-1810), and **Independence** (1810-present).

## Pre-Hispanic

Unlike most music today, Pre-Hispanic music was used strictly for rituals and ceremonies, never as entertainment. Musicians were highly skilled and revered within society. Instruments were only played when accompanied by singing, and some instruments such as the Aztec teponaztli and huehuetl were divine instruments believed to have supernatural powers.



## Colonial

Throughout the colonial period, music continued to be utilized for its function, not as entertainment, in both Christian and indigenous ceremonies such as Lent and the Fiesta de la Calabaza, or the Festival of Squash held at harvest time. The conquistadors brought new instruments, melodies and forms to the indigenous people of Mexico and introduced this music through the church. The cathedral was the center of musical life in Colonial Mexico where music was the main tool for converting indigenous people to Catholicism. In the early years of the colonial period, Spanish music was intertwined with indigenous Mexican musical traditions, but as time progressed, restrictions on indigenous music increased and the overall sound of Mexican music became more traditionally western. As chamber music was brought to Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, both organ and antiphonal choral textures became more popular among the great number of church musicians. Opera arrived slightly later in Mexico in the 18th century. It was not long before the rituals and musical styles of the indigenous people of Mexico were all but eradicated.

## Independence

In the early Independence period, musicians experienced a decline in jobs and their social status. Fewer musical instruments were made and dance music grew in popularity. Music conservatories were primarily run by Europeans and directed at men; women played a very small role in early Independence era music.

Over time, folk music experienced a resurgence. There are many famous folk genres, but mariachi, a form of the ranchero style, is the most widely recognized Mexican music internationally. Mariachi comes from the French word for marriage; the bands originally played music for weddings and balls. Mariachi bands typically include violins, trumpets and guitars and consist of between seven and 15 musicians. Modern corridos, popular narrative ballads, often discuss politics, events and Mexican or American heroes.

With increasing globalization, Mexican music has not escaped international influence. In addition to folk based popular genres, Mexicans also enjoy rock and roll, heavy metal, ska, alternative, classical, jazz and electronic music.

## Religion in Mexico

The history of religion in Mexico has been influenced very strongly by the arrival of the conquistadors and Catholic missionaries in the 16th century. Today, 9 in 10 Mexicans identify themselves as Catholic. The percentage of Catholics in Mexico has been decreasing since 1970 while the number of evangelicals has been significantly increasing, but Catholicism still dominates the country's religious affiliation.

Mexican Catholicism has incorporated many aspects of indigenous life as a result of the missionaries and conquistadors. The conquistadors used religion as their primary method of assimilation; missionaries established churches in almost every town and tried to incorporate catholic views into the already established indigenous beliefs. This resulted in a contemporary belief system intertwining traditional catholic values and indigenous traditions such as shamanism, herbal healing, and folk saints. Today, many religious places in Mexico such as caves, lakes, hills, rivers, and mountains were former religious sites for indigenous people that were renamed with Christian titles.

In colonial Mexico, daily life was structured around the church. Citizens were expected to tithe and even work for the church as serfs. But with the independence from Spain in 1821, the Catholic Church, while still identified in the constitution as the main religious body, began to lose some of its political power.

The role of the Catholic Church significantly changed with the Mexican Revolution. The new constitution of 1917 established a separation of church and state. Public education was secularized and clergymen were not allowed to be politicians.

While Catholicism is still the main religious affiliation in Mexico today, its practice is quite varied. Some people support traditional folk practices, others are quite conservative in their practice of traditional Western Catholicism.



### Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Virgin of Guadalupe is a symbol of Mexican national identity and one of the most important religious holidays in the country. The tradition originated in December of 1531 during the Colonial Period when an indigenous woodcutter named Juan Diego claimed to have been visited by the Virgin Mary on the hill of Tepeyac outside of Mexico City. The Virgin asked Diego to build a church in her honor on the hill. Diego's bishop didn't believe his request, but when Diego returned with a cloak of roses upon which the Virgin's face was miraculously imprinted, the bishop acknowledged the miracle and a shrine was built in her honor. This tradition is one of many examples of the blending of indigenous beliefs with Catholic beliefs and has become one of the most celebrated holidays in the country.