

Al pie de un árbol
3-part mixed, SSA or TTB, a cappella

Trad. Cardenche Song

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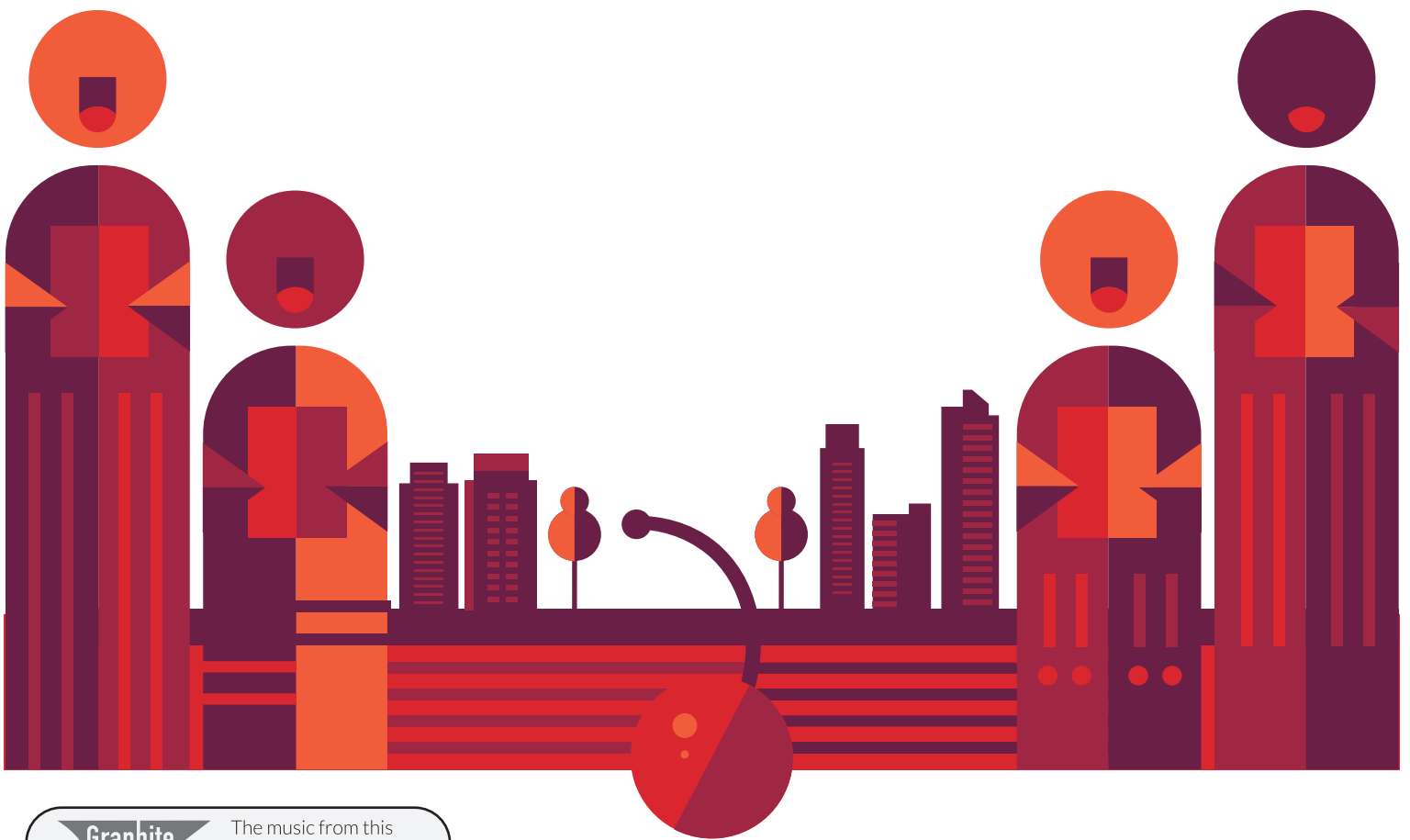
BC-015

BORDER CROSSING

Al pie de un árbol

Flexible: 3-part mixed choir, SSA choir or TTB choir, a cappella

Traditional Cardenche song



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Text and IPA:

1. Al pie de un árbol
[al pje ðeun 'ar.bol]

mi alma se encuentra triste y alumínada
['mjäl.ma seŋ.'kwen.tra 'tris.te ja.lu.mi.'na.ða]

con la luz de la mañana.
[kon la lus ðe la ma.'jna.na]

Salió y me dijo que era esperanza vana
[sa.'ljo i me 'ði.xo 'ke.raes.pe.'ran.sa 'βa.na]

donde a la vez mejor me duermo yo.
['don.dea la βes me.'xor me 'ðwer.mo.jo]

2. La vide venir
[la 'βi.ðe βe.'nir]

mas no creía que era ella,
[mas no kre.'i.a 'ke.ra 'e.ja]

yo me acerqué hacia el pie de su ventana.
[jo me.a.ser.'ke 'a.sjael pje ðe su βen.'ta.na]

Salió y me dijo que era esperanza vana
[sa.'ljo i me 'ði.xo 'ke.raes.pe.'ran.sa 'βa.na]

donde a la vez mejor me duermo yo.
['don.dea la βes me.'xor me 'ðwer.mo.jo]

3. Quisiera ser
[ki.'sje.ra ser]

una garza morena pa'estarte mirando
['u.na 'ɣar.sa mo.'re.na paes.'tar.te mi.'ran.do]

en una redoma de oro.
[en 'u.na re.'ðo.ma 'ðeo.ro]

Pero trigueñita, nomás que me acuerdo lloro
['pe.ro tri.ɣe.'ɲi.ta no.'mas ke me a.'kwer.ðo 'jo.ro]

¿Quién tiene la culpa? Usté que me abandonó.
[kjen 'tje.ne la 'kul.pa us.'te ke me.a.βan.do.'no]

Translation:

1. At the foot of a tree

my soul sits sad and illuminated

by the morning light.

It came out and told me that hope was in vain

where it is better for me to sleep.

2. I saw her come

but I did not believe it was her,

I went close to the foot of her window.

She came out and told me that hope was in vain

where it is better for me to sleep.

3. I would like to be

a brown heron so I could watch you

on a golden hill.

But blond girl, just to remember I weep

Whose fault is it? Yours, you that abandoned me.

Sales of this score support Los Cardencheros de Saporiz.

Performance Note:

Cardenche singing is a genre of unaccompanied polyphonic singing from the Comarca Lagunera, a region in northern Mexico located at the intersection of the states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Durango. The word “cardenche” refers to a type of cactus that grows in this region. The cardenche cactus has hooked barbs that make them very painful, as they rip apart the flesh when they are extracted. In the same way, cardenche songs are meant to be “ripped out” of your body.

The essence of cardenche singing lies in capturing the extreme emotion of the text in the vocal tone and range. Themes that are common in cardenche singing are grief, death, and lost love. Cardenche songs are transmitted in the oral tradition and typically sung with people sitting or standing very close to each other, with very long pauses between each phrase. They are sung by three or four different voice parts, each with its own unique role and sound. “Al pie de un árbol” is a classic song of the cardenche tradition. The protagonist under a tree on a hill watching the sun rise, thinking of lost love. It is implied that they have been sitting under the tree all night and are contemplating ending their own life.

This song has three voice parts: the principal, contralta, and arrastre:

- The voz contralta sings in the highest register in three-part cardenche. The best contralta singers fully commit emotionally while navigating the extreme high notes with a full-bodied tone that pierces the soul; the contralta is the “thorn” of the cardenche cactus. In most cardenche songs, the contralta sings harmony; this song is an exception, with it carrying the melody and lead.
- The voz fundamental is usually the lead voice, but in this case it reinforces the lowest part. In traditional cardenche, the principal singer determines the key and general tempo, and the principal always begins each phrase, with the other voices joining in harmony afterward. To sing the principal, it is essential to have accurate intonation, a clear tone without excessive vibrato, excellent diction, and a confident sense of rhythm.
- The voz de arrastre is the lowest part in the harmony and it drags behind the other parts, always slightly behind the melody and sliding from pitch to pitch. This dragging voice is one element that gives cardenche song its unique sound. Its role is to remain coordinated with the lead voice while also creating a strong foundation for the highest voices to move freely. Arrastre singers are often low basses or altos that sing with a rough, guttural vocal tone, which has led to this voice often being known as the “marrana” (Spanish for “pig”).

Very few people today know and sing in the cardenche tradition, and for some time it was on the verge of disappearing entirely. Los Cardencheros de Saporiz, singers based in the town of Saporiz, Durango, have made it their mission to teach this genre of music to a new generation. They have toured the world and travel around Mexico to perform and teach the style, both in the traditional way and also developing a “choral style” of cardenche together with several Mexican choir directors. All of Border CrosSing’s proceeds from the sale of this score will be donated to Los Cardencheros de Saporiz to help them fund this work.

- Ahmed Anzaldúa

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Al pie de un árbol

flexible 3-part SSA or TTB choir

As sung by Juan Sánchez Ponce,
 Eduardo Elizalde, & Pablo García Antúnez

Traditional Cardenche song
 Saporiz, Lerdo county, Durango
 Performing edition by Ahmed Anzaldúa

♩ = 44

Contralta

1. Al pie de un ár - bol mi al - ma se en - cuen - tra
 2. La vi - de ve - nir mas no cre - í - a que e -
 3. Qui - sie - ra ser u - na gar - za mo -

Fundamental

1. pie de un ár - bol mi al - ma se en - cuen - tra
 2. vi - de ve - nir mas no cre - í - a que e -
 3. - sie - ra ser u - na gar - za mo -

Arrastre

1. ár bol mi al - ma se en - cuen - tra
 2. ve nir mas no cre - í - a que e -
 3. ser u - na gar - za mo -

7

Con.

tris - te ya - lu - mi - na - da con la luz de la ma - ña - na.
 ra_e lla, yo me a - cer - qué ha - cia el pie de su ven - ta - na.
 re - na pa'es - tar - te mi - ran - do en u - na re - do - ma de o - ro.

Fun.

tris - te ya - lu - mi - na - da con la luz de la ma - ña - na.
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12

Con.  Sa - lió y me di - jo que e - ra es - pe - ran - za va - na don -
 Sa - lió y me di - jo que e - ra es - pe - ran - za va - na don -
 Pe - ro tri - gue - ñi - ta (9) no - más que me a - cuer - do llo - ro, ¿quién

Fun.  Sa - lió y me di - jo que e - ra es - pe - ran - za va - na don -
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20

Con.  de a la vez me - jor me duer - - mo yo.
 de a la vez me - jor me duer - - mo yo.
 tie - ne la cul - pa? Us - té que me a - ban - - do - nó.

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*verse 3 only

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Al pie de un árbol

simplified version for 3-part mixed choir

As sung by Juan Sánchez Ponce,
Eduardo Elizalde, & Pablo García Antúnez

Traditional Cardenche song
Saporiz, Lerdo county, Durango
Performing edition by Ahmed Anzaldúa

♩ = 44

Contralta

1. Al pie de un ár - bol mi al ma se en - cuen - tra
2. La vi - de ve - nir mas no cre - í - a que e -
3. Qui - sie - ra ser u - na gar - za mo -

Fundamental

1. pie de un ár - bol mi al ma se en - cuen - tra
2. vi - de ve - nir mas no cre - í - a que e -
3. - sie - ra ser u - na gar - za mo -

Arrastre

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Arr.

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**verse 3 only*

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