

## ¡Vámanos a Chacona!

Music to Celebrate Spring Time  
Early Music featuring Black traditions

La Mourisque / La Moresca

Tylman Susato  
(c.1510/15-1570)

Zarambeque

Fernández de Huete  
(1633/43-1713)  
Arr. Jann Cosart

Un sarao de la chacona

Juan Arañés  
(d. 1649)

**Baylor Early Music Ensembles**

Jann Cosart, Director  
Armstrong Browning Library

## ¡Vámanos a Chacona!

### Music to Celebrate Spring Time - Early Music featuring Black traditions

This vignette of Renaissance music celebrates Black communities from diverse cultural backgrounds. Tonight's assortment of dances genres hints at intriguing cultural interchanges with African peoples. During the Renaissance, African traditions found their way through South America, Mexico, and Nueva España to captivate European ears. Some of these tunes are first preserved after recrossing the Atlantic to Spain and the Lowlands. In this performance, a mixture of oral tradition and manuscript transcriptions are combined to provide a multi-faceted celebration of the Zarambeque, Moresca, and Chacona Black Renaissance Traditions.

La mourisque appears in Tielman Susato's 1551 collection of instrumental dances based on popular tunes, *Danserye*. Susato's collection is important as one of the earliest printed dance collections from the Lowlands. Number six in the book, La mourisque is grouped with the *basse danssen* and features multiple instrumental parts. The dances enjoyed a wide audience and gained lasting popularity due to their printed form. La Mourisque, in Italian *la moresca*, signifies 'relating to or in the style of the Moors.' The dance elements of *morescas* were often exotic, with Moorish element in costumes or dances. Not many musical sources survive – Susato's predates several other *morescas* with notable musical similarities.

Next, the Zarambeque provides a direct example of the Renaissance cultural interchange between Africa and the Hispanic New World. Although the genre enjoyed a rich history of Oral tradition, the tunes have been also preserved in *vihuela* and harp manuscript sketches of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. According to the contemporary *Diccionario de la lengua española*, the zarambeque is "a very lively and buoyant instrumental work and dance, which is quite common among Blacks." Zarambeques appeared in Spain in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> to mid-18<sup>th</sup> centuries, usually in triple meter and characterized by a repeating chordal sequence. This zarambeque has an intriguing rhythm pattern that avoids accents on the downbeat references "Criollo," suggesting a connection to Indigenous Peoples and New Spain. Interesting to note is that the Zarambeque title, (similar to several other early African/South American traditions like *paracumbé*, *cumbée*) contains the characteristically African phoneme "mb."

The Chacona, a popular Spanish dance, was thought to emerge from the Basque word "chacuna" (beautiful) and the French word "chanson" (song). Although the dance type embodied numerous early musical elements from both African and indigenous peoples of the Americas, it first appeared in Spain at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Eventually, its popularity led to its early 17<sup>th</sup>-century introduction in France and its evolution into the serious Baroque "Chaconne." Tonight's version celebrates the Chacona within the rich Hispanic tradition of the *villancico*. Structurally, the song's vocal text follows the alternating form of *Copla* (verse) and *Estribillo* (refrain). Both the *villancico*'s poetry and lively rhythms celebrate the joyful Hispanic outdoor *soirée* (*sarao*), and the Chacona that accompanied it. In our instrumental arrangement for this concert, Juan Arañés' "Un sarao de la chacona" (1634) certainly embodies these joyful themes, incorporating diverse castanet rhythms and an *estribillo* extolling "la vida bona" - the good life.

Tonight's program celebrates Black music from a variety of traditions. Elements of Africa, indigenous traditions, the New World, and Europe combine to create this lively Renaissance vignette. **¡Vámanos a Chacona!**

~ Sarah Hamrin and Maya Johnson

**BAYLOR EARLY MUSIC ENSEMBLES**

Jann Cosart, Director

*The Baylor Early Music Ensembles perform music from the Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque Eras. Cultural contexts and historical performance practices are explored in the rich musical repertoires of our past.*

Brenden Guillory, early violin

Sarah Hamrin, early violin

Maya Johnson, early violin

Catherine Kim, early violin

Aidan Gettemy, viol

Jann Cosart, early violin