MEXICAN CULTURAL CLASSICS

Canciones de Mi Corazón

A PERSONAL SONGBOOK • VOLUME ONE • SONG 001

Las Mañanitas

Traditional Mexican song of celebration and affection

THE PRODUCTION MODEL

Canciones de Mi Corazón is produced as a series of standalone song booklets that can be downloaded and printed individually or assembled into complete ten-song volumes. Each booklet uses the same economical, low-ink, three-hole-punch-compatible format and includes the song's cultural story, words and meaning, pronunciation guidance, music, credits, and learning activities. This modular production model allows students, teachers, families, and community groups to print only what they need, add new songs over time, and create an affordable personal songbook for learning, performance, cultural appreciation, and family enjoyment.

INSIDE THIS MASTER MODULE

- The song’s cultural story and authorship note
- A common four-stanza Spanish text with plain-English meaning
- Pronunciation, vocabulary, and familiar variants
- Verified traditional melody in G major with beginner piano plan
- Memorization, rehearsal, and group-performance guidance

Project & editorial direction: Samuel Colton Sr.

Founder, Welders Without Borders • Master Module V0001

A song that arrives at dawn

ORIGIN • USE • MEXICAN MUSICAL IDENTITY

A LIVING SERENADE

Las Mañanitas belongs to a living Mexican serenade tradition. Its title means "the little morning songs." Traditionally, family or musicians may sing at daybreak to honor someone on a birthday or saint's day; at a modern party, it is commonly sung before the cake is cut. The same custom also reaches public and sacred occasions, including mañanitas offered to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

AUTHORSHIP: WHAT WE CAN HONESTLY SAY

No single, securely documented composer can be named for the familiar traditional song. Indiana University's Cook Music Library identifies the composer as unknown and notes that Manuel M. Ponce is often credited with popularizing it. Some publications instead credit Alfonso Esparza Oteo. Because the evidence does not settle the matter, this edition labels the core song Traditional Mexican and records the competing attributions rather than turning uncertainty into fact.

A SONG WITH MANY HOMES

Its opening invokes King David—the biblical singer and poet—and an older custom of celebrating a person's saint's day. Yet the song remains adaptable: singers replace santo with cumpleaños, add the honoree's name, omit verses, or continue with local and family stanzas. That flexibility is not a defect; it is one reason the song survives as shared folklore.

WHY IT MATTERS

Las Mañanitas became part of Mexican musical identity by doing useful emotional work. It turns affection into ritual: people gather, wake or greet the honoree, and sing together. Mariachi performance and popular recordings helped circulate it, but its deepest strength is domestic. A child, grandparent, neighbor, classroom, or whole party can take part. The song marks belonging as much as a birthday.

EDITORIAL NOTE

This booklet teaches one widely sung version. Your family's wording or melody may differ and still be authentic.

Sing the words; know the meaning

COMMON FOUR-STANZA VERSION • ENGLISH IS A SENSE TRANSLATION

	SPANISH	PLAIN-ENGLISH MEANING
1	Estas son las mañanitas que cantaba el rey David. Hoy por ser día de tu santo, te las cantamos a ti.	These are the morning songs that King David used to sing. Because today is your saint’s day, we sing them now to you.
2	Despierta, mi bien, despierta; mira que ya amaneció. Ya los pajaritos cantan; la luna ya se metió.	Wake up, my dear, wake up; look—the day has already dawned. The little birds are singing; the moon has already gone down.
3	Qué linda está la mañana en que vengo a saludarte. Venimos todos con gusto y placer a felicitarte.	How lovely is the morning on which I come to greet you. We all come gladly, with the pleasure of congratulating you.
4	Ya viene amaneciendo; ya la luz del día nos dio. Levántate de mañana; mira que ya amaneció.	Daybreak is now arriving; daylight has already reached us. Rise up in the morning; look—the day has already dawned.

USE YOUR PERSON’S NAME

After the song—or between verses—many groups call out the honoree’s name. Follow the family or leader.

Make the Spanish feel natural

MEXICAN SPANISH • SPEAK FIRST, THEN SING

Estas son las mañanitas	EH-stahs sohn lahs mah-nyah-NEE-tahs
que cantaba el rey David	keh kahn-TAH-bah el ray dah-BEED
Hoy por ser día de tu santo	oy pohr sehr DEE-ah deh too SAHN-toh
te las cantamos a ti	teh lahs kahn-TAH-mohs ah tee
Despierta, mi bien, despierta	dehs-PYEHR-tah mee byehn dehs-PYEHR-tah
mira que ya amaneció	MEE-rah keh yah ah-mah-neh-SYOH
Ya los pajaritos cantan	yah lohs pah-hah-REE-tohs KAHN-tahn
la luna ya se metió	lah LOO-nah yah seh meh-TYOH

SOUND KEYS

ñ like ny in canyon: mañanitas

ll / y usually like English y: ya

v often close to a soft b: David

j a gentle breathy h: pajaritos

r a light tap: mira

h silent: hoy begins with the vowel

USEFUL WORDS

mañanitas	morning serenades	**amaneció**	it dawned
pajaritos	little birds	**saludarte**	to greet you
felicitarte	to congratulate you	**levántate**	get up / rise
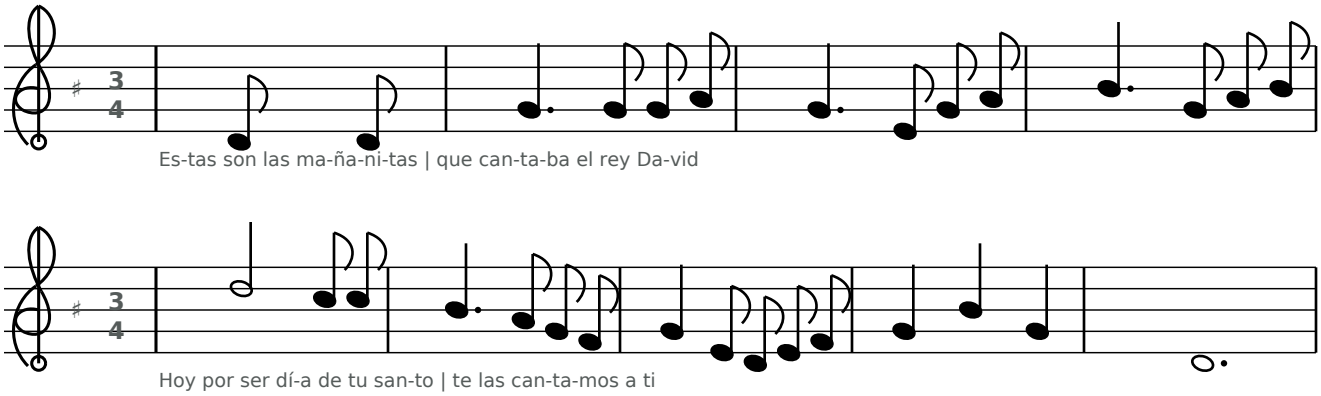
COMMON VARIANT

For a birthday, “Hoy por ser día de tu cumpleaños” often replaces “Hoy por ser día de tu santo.” The extra syllables may be fitted freely; follow the lead singer.

Beginner music in G major

3/4 • GENTLY, ♩ = 84 • MELODY VERIFIED AGAINST THE FLUTETUNES TRADITIONAL SCORE

Sing all verses to this melody. The score below shows the first stanza; use the same tune for later stanzas.



PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT: FIRST MAKE THE WALTZ STEADY

Right hand: play the printed melody one octave higher if needed. Left hand: beat 1 plays the bass note; beats 2 and 3 play the chord softly. Count “ONE-two-three.”

CHORD	BEAT 1: BASS	BEATS 2–3: CHORD
G	G	G–B–D
D7	D	F♯–A–C
C	C	E–G–C

SUGGESTED HARMONIC MAP

Pickup G | G | G | D7 | G | G D7 | G | D7 || G | G | D7 | D7 | G | G D7 | G | D7 G

When a bar shows two chords, change on beat 3. Keep the left hand quieter than the singer.

ARRANGEMENT CREDIT

Beginner accompaniment and engraving prepared for CMC-001 from the cited traditional G-major melody; editorial arrangement, 2026.

From page to memory

A PRACTICAL PATH FOR SOLO, FAMILY, OR CLASSROOM

1

1 • Speak

Read one Spanish line in rhythm. Keep vowels clean and unhurried.

2

2 • Echo

Listen to or play one phrase; sing it back without looking.

3

3 • Chain

Join two lines, then one stanza. Always restart from the previous secure line.

4

4 • Add music

Hum with the piano first; then restore the words. Count the three-beat sway.

5

5 • Perform

Choose a leader, agree on the birthday/saint’s-day wording, and name the honoree.

TWO-MINUTE REHEARSAL

Clap 1–2–3 for four bars. Play G for two bars and D7 for two. Speak stanza 1 in time. Sing once with the melody. Repeat without looking. End together on G.

CREDITS & RIGHTS

Traditional Mexican words and melody; composer unknown. Manuel M. Ponce is often associated with popularizing the song; Alfonso Esparza Oteo is credited by some publications. English sense translation, pronunciation guide, beginner accompaniment, compilation, and editorial design prepared for this project. Project & editorial direction: Samuel Colton Sr., Founder, Welders Without Borders. This V0001 master module is intended for free educational sharing and economical personal printing. Third-party source materials retain their own terms.

HUMAN-READABLE SOURCES

- Indiana University Cook Music Library, “Las Mañanitas,” The Sounds of México — collections.libraries.indiana.edu/cookmusiclibrary/exhibits/show/sounds_of_mexico/las-mananitas
- FluteTunes, “Las mañanitas” (Traditional Mexican), G major, 3/4, ♩ = 84; printable melody added 2010, updated 2014 — flutetunes.com/tunes.php?id=419
- Shannon Parks, “Las Mananitas” (2017), Utah State University Student Folklore Fieldwork, Paper 116 — digitalcommons.usu.edu/student_folklore_all/116/
- UCLA Strachwitz Frontera Collection, “Las Mañanitas” catalog records — frontera.library.ucla.edu/