

ONLINE AUDIO GUIDE 6.4

CUECA

title: “Mi vida” (My Life, or more idiomatically “My Sweetheart”)

language: Spanish

performing forces: voices (one female, one male), harp, bombo (very much in the background), clapping, striking the side of the harp

form: strophic, with introduction, interludes, and a regular internal form in each of the three verses

function: rustic dance song

source: *Chile: Hispano-Chilean Métisse: Traditional Music* (Smithsonian Folkways Archival UNES 08001, 2014)

Listen for:

- major key, i.e. in Western tonal system
- glissandi (plural of glissando)
- internal form of verses (not always sung to the same words) is a, a, b, b, c, b, b, c, b, b, c
- close harmony, probably spontaneously improvised
- hand clapping, other “noise” of live performance
- meter shifts
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Note: The Spanish words “allá va,” which appear frequently in the text, mean “there it/he/she goes.” In this selection, the words have no lexical meaning but instead fill out the metric requirements of the phrases in which they appear. Because songs such as this one appear in so many versions, often a sung text will contain words from these several versions and may not make complete sense when they are combined.

Timing	Structure and text	What’s happening, translation
00:00	Introduction	compound duple meter harp outlines chords
00:18		ascending and descending glissandi
00:19		shift in meter
00: 39	<p>Verse 1 (female singer):</p> <p>(a) Mi vida desde aquí desde aquí te estoy mirando</p> <p>(a) Mi vida desde aquí, desde aquí te estoy mirando</p> <p>(b) Mi vida cara a ca... cara a cara pecho al frente.</p> <p>(b) Mi vida desde aquí, desde aquí te estoy mirando.</p>	<p>harp launches an accompanimental pattern, female singer takes melody</p> <p>male singer will joins in, singing in close harmony, occasionally singing in unison, as in end of (b)</p> <p>hand claps</p> <p>tapping on side of the harp</p> <p>Sweetheart, I’m looking at you from here.</p> <p>Sweetheart, face to face, not looking back.</p>

	<p>(c) Con los ojos del alma, allá va te estoy mirando</p> <p>(b) y con los de la cara allá va disimulando. (b) con los de la cara allá va disimulando.</p> <p>(c) disimulando ay si allá va que ojos tan bellos</p> <p>(b) que se van y me dejan allá va muerto por ellos. (b) que se van y me dejan allá va muerto por ellos.</p> <p>(c) Muero por tus ojitos allá van tan rebonitos.</p>	<p>With the eyes of my soul, I'm looking at you.</p> <p>And with the eyes of my face, concealing</p> <p>concealing, oh yes, those beautiful eyes</p> <p>that go away and leave me dying for them.</p> <p>I die for your pretty little eyes.</p>
1:39	Harp interlude	Harp plays melody established by the singers
1:56	<p>Verse 2:</p> <p>(a) Mi vida los ojos, los ojos de una morena (a) Mi vida los ojos, los ojos de una morena</p> <p>(b) Mi vida van dici... van diciendo por la calle (b) Mi vida los ojos, los ojos de una morena</p> <p>(c) Tienes unos ojitos, allá va y unas pestañas</p> <p>(b) Y una voz que embustera, allá va con que me engañas. (b) Y una voz que embustera, allá va con que me engañas.</p> <p>(c) Con que me engaña ay si, allá va que ojos tan bellos</p> <p>(b) Que se van y me dejan, allá va muerto por ellos (b) Que se van y me dejan allá va muerto por ellos.</p> <p>(c) Muero por tus ojitos allá van tan rebonitos.</p>	<p>harp resumes accompanying</p> <p>Sweetheart, the eyes of a dark woman</p> <p>Sweetheart, they are saying out on the street</p> <p>That you have quite the eyes, and eyelashes too</p> <p>and a voice that lies, with which you deceive me,</p> <p>with which you deceive me, oh yes, those beautiful eyes</p> <p>that go away and leave me dying for them.</p> <p>I die for those pretty little eyes.</p>
2:56	Harp interlude	see above
3:11	<p>Verse 3:</p> <p>(a) Mi vida debajo, debajo de un limón verde (a) Mi vida debajo, debajo de un limón verde.</p> <p>(b) Mi vida donde el a... donde el agua no corría. (b) Mi vida debajo, debajo de un limón verde.</p> <p>(c) Veinticinco limones allá va tiene una rama.</p>	<p>Sweetheart, under a green lemon tree,</p> <p>Sweetheart, where no water flows,</p> <p>Twenty-five lemons, all on a branch,</p>

	(b) Y amanecen cincuenta, allá va por la mañana. (b) Y amanecen cincuenta, allá va por la mañana. (c) Por la mañana ay si allá va el limón maduro. (b) Y hacéle un cariñito, allá va con disimulo. (b) Y hacéle un cariñito, allá va con disimulo. (c) Y hacé lo que hizo el guaso, allá va y dale un abrazo.	And the morning brings fifty more. In the morning, the lemon tree matures. So show it a little affection, in a hidden way, And do just as a rustic guy does—embrace it.
		final cadence, with ritard and broken chord

The author thanks Víctor Márquez for assistance with the English translation.

Consider:

- Do you find that the words make sense or do you believe that the words sung here are the result of several versions that don't necessarily cohere?
- If you do conclude that the words make sense, what do you suppose the lemon tree symbolizes?
- Evaluate the performance style. How would this selection sound if it were a studio recording and what would be the trade-off?