



It's time for a National Anthem for Latinos

by Juana Bordas

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In 1919 the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) adopted the song “Lift every voice and sing” as the Black national anthem. The song continues to inspire hope and faith. “Lift every voice and sing” has brought pride and solidarity for Black people for 100 years.

Latinos were only declared a minority in the 1980 census on. We are in still in the *identity formation stage*. The adoption of a national anthem that speaks to our uniqueness and common experiences would serve as a source of unity, pride, and bring deeper meaning to what it means to be Latino. But what song could bring the vast Latino diversity together?

In the 1960's when the humble farm workers marched with César Chávez advocating for decent wages and working conditions, they sang *De Colores*. A traditional and beloved song, thought to have been brought over from Spain in the 16th century, *De Colores* literally means ‘of many colors’.

The song celebrates the incredible beauty of life's diversity – the multicolored birds, the radiant flowers, and the luminescent rainbow. The chorus says that just as life by its very nature is so colorful, so too great love embraces people of many colors.

This song resonates with our Latino soul because we are *De Colores*. The many colors of humanity are right across the family dinner table. Our diversity is rooted in our mixed racial, cultural, and historical heritage.

Latinos are not a race. Much like the Jewish community, Latinos are an ethnic or cultural group bound together by the Spanish language, a shared history and heritage, a revered spiritual tradition, and common values that stem from both our Spanish and indigenous roots.

Latinos are a rich culture of synthesis and fusion that celebrate *de colores* – the radiant rainbow of humanity. Our love for diversity is apparent in our *bienvenido* or welcoming spirit and in the Latino golden rule: *Mi Casa es su Casa*. These dynamics fashion a culture that is exquisitely diverse, inclusive, and celebrates people's uniqueness. Furthermore since Latinos are a culture not a race the door is open for people to become Latino by Affinity or Corazón.

This moment in history when the Latino community is coming of age is also the time when our multicultural nation and global community is rapidly emerging. Leaders must ensure that people of different races, ages, nations, sexual orientations, religions and cultures work and live peacefully together.

Embracing the spirit of *De Colores* offers a pathway to accomplish this – to integrate our kaleidoscope society and welcome the gifts of all people.

Yes! The emergence of a *De Colores* America will be a defining characteristic of the 21st century. Because of our inherent diversity, Latinos will be at the headwaters of this transformation and be a model for building the multicultural society. We can show people how celebrating *De Colores* – brings beauty, vitality, joy and grace to life.

For this reason, I believe *De Colores* is the Hispanic national anthem.
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