

EDITOR'S NOTES FOR "MOTETE A LA SANTISIMA VIRGEN" (AVE MARIS STELLA)

This piece was transcribed from a set of manuscript individual part scores ("particellas"). No description was included of the overall ensemble size (i.e., there is no reference to string quartet or quintet). The solo voice (contralto) particella features an unidentified bass line, which exactly duplicates the separate contrabass score, but in the absence of instrumental identification, could also represent a completely separate part. It was therefore unclear whether the composer intended this bass line merely as guidance to the vocalist, as a separate line for a cellist, or both. I have noticed in other transcriptions of Eslava's orchestral works that he often essentially doubles the cello and contrabass parts, playing the same notes separated by an octave. Since this doubling lends a fuller bass sound in the full performance, in this transcription I have assumed that Eslava intended (or at least would have preferred) to use a cello, and I have accordingly scored in the cello part.

Ave maris stella (Latin for "Hail, star of the sea") may have originated as early as the eighth century as a plainsong hymn to Mary. Its poetic portrayal of Mary as a loving mother and a guiding "star of the sea" has made it an enduring theme in the Roman Catholic Church and a favorite of Hilarión Eslava's, which he fashioned into at least one or two other compositions. The motet transcribed here features only an abbreviated version of the full Latin text of the Marian hymn.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

Hail, star of the sea,
Nurturing Mother of God,
And ever Virgin
Happy gate of Heaven.

Show thyself to be a Mother:
Through Thee may He receive prayer
Who, being born for us,
Undertook to be thine own.