

## Notes for “Plegaria” and “O Gloriosa”

The two short works, “Plegaria” and the hymn “O Gloriosa” came to us in loose manuscript form from the Koninklijke Bibliotheek/Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique (KBR) in Brussels, Belgium. They appear to be solo organ pieces, but I have chosen to render them in the "strings" sound font, given the limited choices available for organ renderings in MuseScore. These pieces are richly contrapuntal in nature, and would seem to be late works by the composer.

Eslava’s religious music received wide diffusion and fame in Belgium during his lifetime. The Belgian weekly journal “Le Guide Musical”, in its issue for 8-15 August 1878, publishes a full-page homage by one of its editors to Eslava on the occasion of the composer’s death, which concludes with the following words:

“All of Belgium is particularly familiar with his religious works, which are distinguished by their solemnity, simplicity, true greatness, the originality of their melody, of their harmony, of their rhythm; in brief by the symphonic color that always conveys a wise sobriety fed by true classical traditions. We especially cite the Solemn Mass in E-flat, the Funeral Mass, the “Lauda Sion”, the “Salve Regina”, the “Te Deum” written in commemoration of the birth of the Prince of Asturias, and, not least, that admirable Canticle (“Cántiga”) of king Alfonso de Wise, a 13th century work found by Eslava in the library at El Escorial, transcribed by him in modern harmony and then developed with all of the wealth of instrumentation of our time. This latter score is a masterpiece and, wherever it has been performed, it has produced the greatest enthusiasm. Why has not today’s Spain turned it into its national anthem? Its melodic form is just as rousing as that found in “God Save the Queen” or in the Austrian anthem!

The Masses and motets of don H. Eslava, first performed in Louvain some fifteen years ago, have since then and on many occasions been solemnly interpreted at the church of Sainte Gudule (the cathedral of Saints Michael and Gudule) in Brussels and in the cathedrals of Antwerp, Liège, Namur, and in many other of our principal provincial churches. Professional and amateur artists, clergy and lay people, recognize their true religious character and here, as in France and in Spain, proclaim them as models of their genre.

The death of don Hilarion Eslava will be sincerely grieved in the entire musical world of Europe.”

**Postscript:** Subsequent to my re-editing, we discovered that these pieces actually originate with Part I of Eslava’s “Museo Orgánico Español” (Op. 121), so they are indeed organ pieces designed to (beautifully) illustrate organ composition and interpretation techniques.