

Editor's Notes for Misa En Do

Eslava wrote several different Masses during his career. I have already transcribed one such work – the “Misa Breve” – and the editor’s notes for that piece, including translation of its five movements, also apply to this work. Here is a link to those notes: <https://hilarioneslava.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Misa-Breve-Editors-Notes.pdf>

My source for this composition was an undated handwritten manuscript. Although I can only speculate regarding timelines, I suspect this work was probably composed after the Misa Breve, for a couple of reasons. Though otherwise fully orchestrated, all of its movements except the third (Credo) include an organ part consisting of “figured bass” (or “basso continuo”) notation. The Credo, on the other hand, while providing a full keyboard reduction that was likely played on the organ for practice purposes, does not otherwise use the organ at all. Further, the Credo is written for a single SATB choir, as opposed to the double choir in the other four movements. And most obviously, when I started working on the Credo here, I immediately recognized that it was essentially identical to the Credo in the “Misa Breve”.

I transcribed the Misa Breve from a publication by Eslava’s nephew, Bonifacio Eslava (most of Eslava’s published works were from Bonifacio’s publishing house). You can find the Misa Breve at https://musescore.com/rebecca_rufin/misa-breve-mass-in-5-movements or <https://hilarioneslava.org/music/>. In comparing the two, it appeared to me that the only difference between the handwritten and published versions of the Credo’s were likely transcription errors by Bonifacio, or musical errors by Hilarión and corrected by Bonifacio. In my own transcriptions, I have run across numerous examples of both, and routinely correct them in my own transcriptions (and of course I likely make some errors myself, either inadvertently or by wrong assumptions regarding accuracy of the source material, which is why it is always a good idea to review my source material if you have any doubts regarding my work). Anyway, I suspect that Hilarión Eslava may have been under some sort of deadline when he was working on the Misa En Do, and since the Credo from Misa Breve happened to be written in the key of C, he decided to slip that portion in with the new Misa en Do manuscript and simply recycle it.

One final note, I have included a very rudimentary interpretation in the figured bass organ that did not appear in the original score. All elements that did not appear in the score are written in Voice 3 and appear in small notes. I did this for two reasons: 1) I have very limited experience in performance of figured bass, and thought that musicians like myself might appreciate a few hints; and 2) Eslava’s handwriting is often difficult to read, and being able to hear it playing helped me to know if I was reading it correctly. For all those purists out there who don’t want my amateur help in this regard, please forgive me and ignore those small notes!