

## Editor's Notes on *Allegro Marcial para Orquesta con Instrumentos de Percusión*

Here is one of several demonstration pieces found in Eslava's five-part treatise on Composition ("Escuela de composición") Part 4, which deals with the subject of Instrumentation and was published in 1870. The piece, titled "Periodo-Modelo N°14 – Allegro Marcial para Orquesta con Instrumentos de Percusión", highlights various percussive instruments that were commonly found in military bands and traditional folk ensembles during Eslava's time, integrated with more conventional orchestral instruments.

This dramatic work transitions between a martial theme and gentler 6:8 pastoral sections, in a format vaguely reminiscent of the "Coro de Guerreros y Pastoras" found in Eslava's first opera, *Il Solitario*, which I have previously transcribed (look for the title in <https://hilarioneslava.org/music/> under "Opera" and see also [https://musescore.com/rebecca\\_rufin/coro-general-de-guerreros-y-pastoras-chorus-of-soldiers-and-shepherdesses](https://musescore.com/rebecca_rufin/coro-general-de-guerreros-y-pastoras-chorus-of-soldiers-and-shepherdesses)). Given its operatic character, I cannot help but wonder if this short work could be in fact be a missing fragment from one of Eslava's operas, repurposed here for illustrative purposes (that would not be a first for Eslava).

Style-wise, this piece is quite a contrast with the more Romantic demonstration piece that precedes it in the same treatise, which you can find under "Larghetto para grande orquesta con adición de corno inglés y arpa" in <https://hilarioneslava.org/music/> (under the heading "Otras obras/Other works") and in [https://musescore.com/rebecca\\_rufin/h-eslava-larghetto-para-grande-orquesta-con-adici-n-de-corno-engl-s-y-arpa-anai-s-transcription](https://musescore.com/rebecca_rufin/h-eslava-larghetto-para-grande-orquesta-con-adici-n-de-corno-engl-s-y-arpa-anai-s-transcription).

The original score for this *Allegro Marcial* called for various woodwind and brass instruments that are no longer commonly found in a symphonic setting. I have replaced (and transcribed as needed) these with instruments that I believe are close equivalents considered standard today, as indicated below:

Original score (Spanish/English)		Current closest equivalent
Octavín	Piccolo	Piccolo
Flautas	Flutes	Flutes
Oboes	Oboes	Oboes
Clarinetes en do	Clarinets in C	B-flat Clarinets
Fagotes	Bassoons	Bassoons
Clarines en fa	Trumpets in F	B-flat Trumpet
Cornetines en sol	Cornet in G	B-flat Cornet
Trompas en do	Natural horns in C	French horns in F
Trompas de pistones en fa	Valved horns in F	French horns in F
Trombones (1º, 2º y 3º)	Trombones (1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> )	Trombones (1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> )
Figle (en do)	Ophicleide (in C)	CC Contrabass tuba
Timbales do, sol	Timpani C, G	Timpani C, G
Violín (1º y 2º)	Violin (1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	Violin (1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> )
Viola	Viola	Viola
Violón y contrabajo	Violoncello and contrabass	Violoncello and contrabass
Tambor y bombo	Drum and bass drum	Tenor and bass drums
Triángulo y redoblante	Triangle and snare drum	Triangle and snare drum
Lira (de percusión)	Glockenspiel	Glockenspiel
Pandero y tamboril*	Tambourine and tamboril*	Tambourine and tamboril*



\**Tamboril* (sometimes translated in English as *tabor* or *tabret*) is a type of snare drum, often handheld, used as a folk instrument in many parts of Spain and in other regions of Europe to provide a leading beat to the music. It can vary in size and playing technique. From his description in the “Escuela de composición”, Eslava may have been thinking of the Basque *tamboril* of his Navarrese homeland, which traditionally accompanies the *txistu*, or Basque flute (left).

*Txistulari*, by Alberto Arrue (1878-1944), Museo de Bellas Artes de Álava

Here are Eslava’s annotations concerning this piece, from his Treatise:

“Condiciones: 1ª. Debe hacerse uso de los instrumentos de percusión, alternando los de gran fuerza con los que no la tienen, y uniéndose después todos ellos. 2ª. Con los instrumentos fuertes de percusión debe tomar parte toda la orquesta, y con los de poca fuerza deben tomarla el viento-madera y la cuerda.

Nótese 1º Que los efectos del viento-metal en este periodo se limitan a reforzar la melodía y la armonía, de modo que una y otra se oigan, debidamente, sin embargo de tomar parte en él los más ruidosos instrumentos de percusión. 2º Que en las frases primera y segunda la parte melódica se halla reforzada al unísono y a la octava por todos los instrumentos agudos y aun por el cornetín, que corresponde a la región media, porque así lo requiere el uso de los instrumentos fuertes de percusión y lo recargado del acompañamiento. De otro modo no podría oírse debidamente dicha parte melódica. 3º Que en la frase tercera de 6:8 la melodía que en ella domina se ejecuta a media fuerza, observándose el precepto de no duplicarla al unísono y sí a la octava superior e inferior; porque los instrumentos de percusión y demás que la acompañan son de poca fuerza. 4º. Que en la última frase de 6:8, que es la *coda* del período, hay en los compases tercero y quinto acordes *cortados* que, aunque dados por todos los instrumentos de percusión y de viento-metal, no destruyen el suave colorido del primer miembro de la frase. Téngase presente este procedimiento de los acordes *cortados* para aplicarlo oportunamente en casos análogos.”

(“Conditions: 1st. Percussion instruments should be used, alternating those that are very loud with those that are not, and then joining them all together. 2nd. Accompanying loud percussion instruments should be the whole orchestra, and with those that are fainter, the woodwinds and strings.

Note: First- That the effects of the brass in this piece are limited to reinforcing the melody and harmony, so that both can be heard properly, despite the loudest percussion instruments taking part in it. Second- That in the first and second phrases, the melodic part is reinforced in unison and at an octave by all the sharp instruments and even by the cornet, even though it belongs to the middle range, because the use of strong percussion instruments and the rich accompaniment require it; otherwise, the melodic part could not be heard properly. Third- That in the third phrase in the 6:8 section, the dominant melody is played at half strength, observing the precept of not duplicating it in unison, though definitely on the upper and lower octaves, because the percussion instruments and others that accompany them are not considered loud. Fourth- That in the last 6:8 section, which is the *coda* of the section, the third and fifth bars contain *cut* chords, which, though played by all percussion and brass instruments, do not destroy the soft coloring of the first element of the phrasing. Keep this *cut* chord procedure in mind so it can be applied opportunely in analogous cases.”)