

Editor's Notes on *Three Examples for String Ensembles*

These three demonstration pieces come from Part 4 of Eslava's five-part treatise on Composition ("Escuela de composición"), which deals with the subject of Instrumentation and was published in 1870. These short, yet charming compositions are found in Section 2 of the treatise, which Eslava titles "De los instrumentos de cuerda y arco" ("Of string and bow instruments"). They are meant to serve as illustrations of instrumentation techniques used for small string ensembles. The expectation is that students will analyze them and use them as templates to gradually explore their own variations on tempo and on the basic characteristics of each setting.

As these are relatively short pieces and all three are similarly scored, I have chosen to group them as a set. They flow well together and could perhaps be performed as a three-part string sonatina.

In his book, Eslava goes into some depth explaining the techniques displayed by every example. Here, for brevity, I have only translated the basic descriptions of each of the pieces:

Modelo N^o1

Marked *Allegro moderato* and scored for solo violin, a second violin, viola, cello, and contrabass.

"Condiciones. 1^a. Solo de violín; 2^a. Acompañamiento sencillo; 3^a. Uso de doble y triple cuerda donde quepa naturalmente."

("Features. 1st. Solo violin; 2nd. Simple accompaniment; 3rd. Use of double and triple strings wherever there is a natural fit.")

Modelo N^o2

Marked *Moderato* and scored for two violins, viola, and cello.

"Condiciones. Las que son propias del género puro de cuarteto; a saber: 1^a. La riqueza en la armonía; 2^a. Interés en el movimiento de cada una de las partes del cuarteto; 3^a. Mayor pureza y corrección que cuando se escribe para orquesta. Se advierte que en este periodo no toma parte el contrabajo."

("Features. Those appropriate to the quartet genre, namely: 1st. Richness in the harmony; 2nd. Interest in the movement of each of the parts of the quartet; 3rd. Greater purity and care than when one writes for the orchestra. Note that the contrabass is not present in this example.")

Modelo N^o3

Marked *Andante* and scored for two violins, viola, cello solo, and contrabass.

"Condiciones. 1^a. Solo de violón; 2^a. Diseños de algún interés en el violín primero; 3^a. Armonía sencilla pero variada con arpeggios y notas tenidas."

("Features. 1st. Cello solo; 2nd. A somewhat more elaborate scoring of the first violin; 3rd. Simple but varied harmony with arpeggios and sustained notes.")