

Editor's Notes on *Three Examples for Small Orchestras*

These three demonstration pieces or examples 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 compositions are found in Section 4 of the treatise, which Eslava titles "De los instrumentos de viento metal" ("Of brass instruments"). Here Eslava adds brass instruments into the string and woodwind instruments that he described in prior sections of the treatise. At this point, the small ensemble has grown to the point of becoming a small orchestra, and these three pieces illustrate orchestration and playing techniques used for a more extensive set of instruments. With each example piece, Eslava adds more brass instruments and stylistic elements. The expectation is that students will analyze them and use them as templates to gradually explore their own variations on technique, tempo, and the basic characteristics of each setting.

As these are relatively short pieces and referred to as pieces for "pequeña orquesta" ("small orchestra"), I have chosen to group them as a set. They flow well together and could perhaps be performed as a three-part series.

In his book, Eslava goes into some depth explaining the specific characteristics of the brass instrument(s) he is introducing, as well as techniques utilized within every example. Here, for brevity, I have only translated the basic descriptions of each of the pieces and the corresponding postscripts:

Modelo Nº 8 - Allegro Moderato

Marked *Allegro moderato* and scored for flute, oboe, A-clarinete, basson, Horn in D, 2 violins, viola, cello, and contrabass.

"Condiciones. 1ª. Solo y duo de trompas; 2ª. Fuerte unísono en la parte grave de la cuerda; 3ª. Efectos particulares en el viento-madera."

("Features. 1st. Solo and horn duet; 2nd. Strong unison in the lower registers of the strings; 3rd. Particular effects in the woodwinds.)

As a postscript, the *particular effects* Eslava alludes to (which he references using italics) are described as "in the first phrase, they (the woodwinds) accompany the horns with small rhythmic-harmonic designs in the higher part; in the second one, they reinforce the strings; in the third they appear alone, with the bassoons and clarinets serving as background, forming the four elements of the harmony in the middle and lower parts; and in the fourth and final (phrase) they do the same as at the beginning, adding elements of accompaniment in the flute part."

Modelo Nº 9 - Andante Cantabile

Marked *Andante Cantabile* and scored for flute, oboe, B-flat clarinet, bassoon, B-flat cornet, B-flat horn, two violins, viola, cello, and contrabass.

"Condiciones. 1ª. Breve solo de flauta en la parte grave; 2ª. Parte importante en las cornetines; 3ª. Efectos particulares del viento-madera."

("Features. 1st. Brief flute solo in the lower register; 2nd. Important part in the cornets; 3rd. Particular effects of the woodwinds.")

The postscript to the piece reads: “Note the particular effects of the woodwinds in the previous sample. In the first phrase, the flute sings in the low octave, accompanied by the *pizzicato* of the strings, because the sweetness of the low sounds of the flute requires it. In the second (phrase), the woodwinds form rhythmic-harmonic patterns in the bass part. In the third, the cornets and horns are accompanied by strong and sharp chords, both in the woodwinds and in the strings, which, without drowning out the melody, give great animation to the accompaniment. In the fourth and first half of the fifth (phrases) we proceed as in the second one; and in the second half of the fifth (phrase), the woodwinds double up the strings. Note also in this example the doubling of the voice of the first violin by the cello in the second phrase, and the *divisi* of the first violins in the fourth, which are combinations that always produce a good effect in sweet phrasing, as employed here.”

Modelo N° 10 - Adagio Pomposo

Marked *Adagio Pomposo* (*tr.* with pomp or solemnity) and scored for flute, oboe, B-flat clarinet, bassoon, E-flat trumpet, E-flat horn, trombone, two violins, viola, cello, and contrabass.

“Condiciones. 1ª. Parte importante en los trombones y clarines; 2ª. Crescendos y diminuendos en las notas medias del viento-metal; 3ª. Efectos particulares del viento-madera.”

(“Features. 1st. Important part in trombones and trumpets; 2nd. Crescendos and diminuendos in the middle notes of the brass; 3rd. Particular effects of the woodwinds.”)

Here’s the postscript: “Note in the preceding example the *particular effects* of the woodwinds. In the first phrase, they create a dialogue with the brass, executing interesting designs in two groups; one of which is formed by the flute and the two oboes and the other by the two clarinets and the bassoon. It is necessary to note that, as in these designs there are series of sixths, the result is consecutive fifths between the first oboe and the first clarinet; but this series, deliberately placed here, does not constitute any fault, since it is between instruments of different groups, which only duplicate each other an octave apart. In the second phrase, the two flutes sing in thirds, doubled at an octave by the clarinets. In the rest of the sample, the woodwinds only reinforce the strings and the brass, except for the last four measures, in which the two bassoons in octaves softly sing the melodic part.”