

Editor's Notes for *Three Contest Pieces for Flute*

In 1854, Hilarión Eslava joined the Royal Conservatory of Music of Madrid (Real Conservatorio Superior de Música de Madrid, RCSMM) as a Professor of Composition, rising to the position of Director of Music in 1866. We now understand that one of his teaching responsibilities at the Conservatory was to compose short, technically challenging pieces for a variety of solo instruments, to be used in student year-end examinations and in competitions for aspiring professional instrumentalists.

We were recently apprised by another investigator working on Eslava's music of an article on music for the trombone kept in the archives of the RCSMM¹, which referenced a "Colección de Melodías de Exámenes y Concursos para los Instrumentos de Orquesta" (*sic*), comprising about 160 manuscript pages of solo pieces for a variety of instruments by several composers, written during the period 1856-1876². Among these pieces were nine indicated as having been authored by Eslava, including these three flute pieces. As it turns out, the Eslava compositions for clarinet and one of the bassoon pieces in that compilation have already been edited by others and published by two Spanish commercial publishing houses. Our aim is to edit and freely avail to others all of the remaining pieces by Eslava in this collection.

In reviewing the source document, it became clear that all of the scores were in the same handwriting. We imagine that some unfortunate student with remarkable penmanship must have been presented with a large stack of unsorted, deteriorating manuscript pages in various states of legibility, and tasked with organizing it and making it presentable. If so, that student did an outstanding job, and can be forgiven for a few possible notation errors that may have occurred or been left uncorrected in that process.

We speculate that aspiring or competing instrumentalists were asked to sightread these pieces as part of the judging process. They would have likely had little or no practice time. Looking at the flute pieces in this work, I concluded based on the pattern of rests (especially several measures at the beginning of a piece) that there must have been keyboard accompaniment provided, as a reasonable aid for the student to readily establish the necessary tempo and mood while sightreading the music. Eslava may have even personally performed the accompaniment. Unfortunately, such accompaniments do not appear to have survived.

Never one to be deterred from a worthy mission by such challenges, I decided to write my own piano accompaniments. Therefore, what you have with this edition must necessarily be a somewhat *Rufin-esque* take on an Eslava melody, and I would hope that those among us who consider themselves enthusiasts of Eslava's music will not hold any feelings of disappointment against me. If the original accompaniments are ever found, I will certainly revise these transcriptions accordingly.³

¹ The complete article citation is Escribano Redondo, J., "Repertorio inédito de los siglos XIX y XX para trombón en el Real Conservatorio Superior de Música de Madrid", *Música*, núm. 27 (2020), RCSMM, pp. 163-194. In Spanish.

² A digital copy of this collection has been made publicly available and posted online by the RCSMM at <https://rcsmm.eu/general/files/biblioteca/00000438300-1.pdf>. Most recently consulted Sept. 27, 2021.

³ In the interest of full disclosure, you will note on the printed scores that the flute solos are listed as Eslava's and the keyboard accompaniment is clearly identified as my own. Further, from a legal standpoint, the not-for-profit editing and publication of this supplemented work endeavors to be in full compliance with Spain's intellectual property law (*BOE núm. 97, de 22/04/1996*, at <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-1996-8930>, in Spanish), including specifically the moral rights provisions under Arts. 14.3 and 14.4, by virtue of Art. 15.1.

The only melody I recognized from other of Eslava's works in these pieces is in the "Allegro Moderato" movement of the 1858 *Concurso*. This is basically an elaborate variation on the *estribillo* (refrain) section found in a *Baile de Seises* I have previously transcribed –see https://musescore.com/rebecca_rufin/baile-de-los-seises-dance-of-the-seises or the corresponding entry in <https://hilarioneslava.org/music/>, under "Corpus Christi, Santísimo Sacramento/Feast of Corpus Christi, Blessed Sacrament", *Candor de la Luz Eterna - Baile de Seises*, beginning at Measure 61. Although I felt that the simple piano accompaniment in the *Baile*, where the piano plays the melody throughout, was completely inappropriate for the flute variation in the *Concurso*, I did draw on it a bit in terms of chord structure and certain rhythmic elements. Therefore, I believe this particular section is likely the closest approximation to Eslava's original. The other melodic themes may well draw on other more developed works by Eslava, perhaps even some of his opera melodies, but we have yet to encounter these in our project.

There were a number of measures within each of the pieces that most likely contained notational errors, and I adjusted a note or two with an accidental or natural accordingly. Other measures that had questionable but possible note pitchings I left as they appear in the source document. Also, the many scale runs and arpeggios throughout did not give clear indication as to whether they were triplets or standard note divisions. I generally followed the beaming structures within the time signature to reconcile these, and left the beam division numbers that Musescore automatically inserts. In one case (Measure 18 of the 1859 *Concurso*), I changed the measure to 5:4; I couldn't make sense of the timing in any other way. Since that particular measure consists of a dramatic flute "*a piacer*" flourish, it probably does not matter.