

Editor's Notes on *Allegro Moderato for a Large Orchestra*

Here is another demonstration piece (or example) 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. With each successive example piece contained in this treatise, Eslava adds more 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.

Although this short composition is found in Section 4 of the treatise, which Eslava titles "De los instrumentos de viento metal" ("Of brass instruments"), at this point he has added in the timpani in addition to a large brass section, thus crossing the threshold from small to large orchestra.

Marked *Allegro moderato*, this example is scored for Flute, Oboe, A-Clarinet, Bassoon, D-Trumpet, Horn in A, (piston) Horn in E, Trombone, Timpani, two Violins, Viola, Cello, and Contrabass. Though I normally will convert parts written for rarer antique instruments to more common modern close equivalents, I have chosen not to do so in this example, because Eslava would have selected these instruments for specific reasons related to ease of playing and/or nuances of their sound/timbre.

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

Initial Description:

"Condiciones. 1ª. Uso de timbales y cuatro trompas; 2ª. Interés en la armonía y en el movimiento de las diversas partes de la orquesta, participando del género sinfónico."

("Features. 1st. Use of timpani and four horns; 2nd. Interest in the harmony and the movement of the different parts of the orchestra, as used in the symphonic genre.)

Postscript:

"Nótese que la composición del precedente periodo participa del género sinfónico, que se distingue generalmente por su mayor interés de armonía y movimiento de orquesta, lo cual debe tener presente el discípulo en los que él escriba a imitación del modelo. Respecto a los efectos particulares del viento, nótese: que en la primera frase calla el viento-metal, y el viento-madera acompaña a la cuerda con acordes cortados o que caen en partes no heridas por la melodía. En la 2ª frase, que es fuerte, lleva la principal parte el viento-metal, los timbales y el viento-madera, con un acompañamiento vigoroso de la cuerda. En la 3ª y 4ª, que ejecuta la cuerda, hacen diseños de acompañamiento varios instrumentos do viento-madera. En la 5ª juegan las tres masas, teniendo una parte interesante los timbales. Adviértase en estos que los la que se dan a contratiempo por espacio de cinco compases no forman el verdadero bajo de la armonía, siendo únicamente notas propias de los acordes que se suceden, que es lo que se exige de este instrumento, según quedó sentado anteriormente."

"Note that the composition of the preceding example represents the symphonic genre, which is generally distinguished by its greater interest in harmony and orchestral movement, something that the student should keep in mind in those (samples) he writes in imitation of the model.

Regarding the particular effects of the wind instruments, it should be noted that in the first phrase, the brass is silent and the woodwinds accompany the string with cut chords or chords that fall on parts not touched by the melody. In the 2nd phrase, which is strong, the brass, timpani and woodwinds take the leading part, with a vigorous string accompaniment. In the 3rd and 4th phrases, which are played by the strings, several woodwind instruments play accompaniment patterns. In the 5th, the three masses play, with an interesting part for the timpani. Note about the latter that when they are played off-time for five bars they do not constitute the true base harmony, being instead only notes pertaining to the chords that follow, as required of this instrument, in accordance with what was stated earlier.”