

Editor's Notes for *Misa a Ocho en Si bemol*

Roman Catholic Masses are very structured, with certain required litanies and responses that may be sung. Many composers have set these liturgical elements to music, including Hilarión Eslava, who wrote several different “Misas” (Masses) during his life. Each of Eslava’s Masses is quite unique musically, and spectacular in its own way. Other *Misas* I have already transcribed (as of October 18, 2021) include *Misa Breve*, *Misa en Do*, *Misa en La*, *Misa en Mi Bemol*, and *Misa de Canto Mixto* (scores and audio renditions available on this site and on my Muscorescore® pages).

Like all of Eslava’s major works, the *Misa a Ocho en Si bemol* (Mass in B-flat for eight voices) is beautifully orchestrated, and it is unique in its separation of the “*Gloria*” liturgy into three separate movements, each dramatically different from a musical perspective. The orchestration is limited to two oboe sections, two horn sections, two violin sections, contrabass, and organ – relatively small in comparison to some of his other works, but still rich and full in depth.

This work has been edited from a handwritten manuscript obtained from the music archives of the Cathedral of Salamanca in Spain. Therefore, for the cover of the printed score I have chosen a picture of a beautiful Baroque organ (see <https://catedralsalamanca.org/la-musica-de-la-catedral-de-salamanca/>) that was installed at this Cathedral in the 18th century. The Salamanca archive assigns the manuscript a date of 1833, which would correspond to Eslava’s early Sevilla years. It bears in its introduction a page indicating its origin as “Imprenta y Librería de Juan J. Morán” in Salamanca, and does refer to the author of the composition as “Señor Maestro de la Patriarcal Iglesia de Sevilla, D. Hilarion Eslava y Elizondo” (note the Basque spelling of the composer’s name with a ‘b’, often used early in his career). Its CPE (our own *Catalogación Provisional de Eslava*) number is 124.

Although the original score includes an organ part, this is *obligato* and by no means a full reduction of the entire accompaniment. Therefore, I have added my own keyboard reduction to make the piece a bit more accessible for performance purposes. As typical, I found and corrected several musical errors in the handwritten score. Also typical of Eslava, there was not a lot of guidance in terms of dynamics and tempo changes. I included the dynamics he provided and added a few notations I felt were helpful and improved the sound, and also programmed some elements that are not visible in the printed score, but can be heard in playback. Finally, you may notice that I am using a piano sound for the organ part. This is because the limited organ soundfonts available in the Muscorescore platform did not sound well with the other instrumentation. If a suitable organ soundfont is made available in the future, I will revise the audio rendition accordingly.

This Mass incorporates four different Mass liturgical elements, which are described below. These would have been used in the following order in conjunction with the Mass:

1. **Kyrie:** The first part of Mass involves a “Penitential Rite” or “Confession”, which simply acknowledges that everyone sins and has sinned to some degree in their daily lives. This is followed by the Kyrie, which expresses guilt and shame for such sins. The lyrics, taken from the ancient Greek are simple, and translate as:

Kyrie eléison, Christe eléison	Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy
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2. **Gloria:** This is a sung exhortation expressing adoration of God, followed by a prayer to the Holy Trinity. In this work, Eslava has divided the Gloria into three separate movements, each quite distinct in musical character. The traditional Latin lyrics are written and translated below:

<p>Gloria in excelsis Deo (<i>not included in this piece</i>)</p> <p>First Movement: Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te, benedicimus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam, Domine Deus, Rex caelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe, Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris.</p> <p>Second Movement: Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis; <i>qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.</i> <i>Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.</i></p> <p>Third Movement: <i>Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus,</i> <i>Iesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu: in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.</i></p>	<p>Glory to God in the highest (<i>not included in this piece</i>)</p> <p>First Movement: And on earth peace to people of good will. We praise You, we bless You, we adore You, we glorify You. We give You thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, God almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.</p> <p>Second Movement: You take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; You take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; You are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.</p> <p>Third Movement: For You alone are the Holy One, You alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.</p>
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3. **Sanctus:** The *Sanctus* (“Holy”) is typically sung prior to the priest consecrating the Communion elements. The lyrics and translation are:

<p><i>Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus</i> <i>Dominus Deus Sabaoth.</i> <i>Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.</i> <i>Hosanna in excelsis.</i></p>	<p>Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest.</p>
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4. **Agnus Dei:** Finally, the *Agnus Dei* (“Lamb of God”) asks for mercy and peace and is sung prior to the congregants receiving Communion. Lyrics and translation follow:

<p><i>Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,</i> <i>miserere nobis.</i> <i>Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,</i> <i>miserere nobis.</i> <i>Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,</i> <i>dona nobis pacem.</i></p>	<p>Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.</p>
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