

EDITOR'S NOTES FOR THREE MASSES BY HILARIÓN ESLAVA

Misa en Do, Misa en Re, and Misa Breve

Three related Masses by Hilarión Eslava

We received source materials for three of Eslava's masterful Mass compositions from various sources, at different times. The "Misa Breve" was obtained from Eresbil (Basque Music Archives) early on in our Eslava project. Originally published in the print shop of Eslava's nephew, Bonifacio Eslava, I chose to transcribe this Mass first, in October 2019, as it was much more legible than other handwritten manuscripts of similar nature.

By June 2020, I transcribed another Mass received from Eresbil in the form of a handwritten manuscript titled "Misa en Do". Eresbil provided an image file which, based on an identifying rubber stamp marking, appeared to have originated from the Archivo Musical de la Real Capilla de Palacio de Madrid (Musical Archives of the Royal Chapel of the [Royal] Palace in Madrid). I noticed in doing so that the *Credo* movement from this was essentially identical to the *Credo* movement from the Misa Breve. I made mention of this in my Editor's Notes at the time, speculating on whether the Misa Breve or the Misa en Do was composed first. Based on the fact that the handwritten *Credo* included with the Misa en Do was set for 4 voices and lacked any sort of figured bass (elements present in the other movements from Misa en Do) and included an organ keyboard reduction (absent from other Misa en Do movements), I concluded that the *Credo* part must have been repurposed in a hurry from the Misa Breve, and thus the Misa Breve predated Misa en Do.

However, I must stand corrected! In September 2021, we received materials directly from the Archivo Musical de la Real Capilla, including a scan of a bound volume containing the "Misa en Do" and "Misa en Re". Upon inspection, I confirmed that the image of Misa en Do we had received earlier from Eresbil was identical to that received from the Real Capilla. When I started transcribing Misa en Re, I made another discovery. Here, the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Sanctus*, and *Agnus Dei* movements were identical to those contained in the printed Misa Breve.

Although all of Eslava's Masses are very different (and strikingly beautiful in their own unique ways), the common thread he uses to tie them together is the key signature; Misa en Do contains movements in C-major and C-minor, and similarly with Misa en Re, Misa en Mi Bemol, Misa en La, Misa en Sol, etc. So I now conclude that Misa en Do and Misa en Re must have been written prior to the Misa Breve. The Misa Breve seems to have been cobbled together from these two Masses, almost certainly between 1861 and 1868, when Bonifacio Eslava had his print shop on the calle Ancha de San Bernardo in Madrid (the address is listed on the printed cover page). Given that the Misa en Do movements all included figured bass notation (which was perhaps problematic for publication purposes), yet the *Credo* section did not include figured bass and was shorter in length than the *Credo* of Misa en Re, my current theory is that they were chosen in this manner purely as a matter of expediency and ease of printing.

Meanwhile, "Misa Breve" (literally, "Brief Mass", "Missa Brevis" in Latin), the descriptor applied to Eslava's probably latter work, is a term that has been often used to indicate a sung Mass that is relatively short in execution time, or leaving out parts of the Ordinary of the Mass like the *Credo*, or requiring only limited musical resources. But none of these apply here, so more likely, the term "Breve" was instead added here following the custom adopted in the 19th century to assign that label to a

“working Mass”, that is, a sung Mass that is considered to be within the reach of a church ensemble and for exclusive liturgical use, as opposed to a “Misa Solemne” (“Missa Solemnis”, or Solemn Mass”), a showier, professional concert-quality work for special church occasions or even performance in a concert hall. The qualifier, not needed for the Masses at the Capilla Real, might have been deemed appropriate for a score that was to be printed and sold to the general public. And besides, the title would have been aimed to put this work on par with similarly titled works by Haydn, Mozart, and Gounod.

About the Order of the Mass

Roman Catholic Masses are very structured, with certain required litanies and responses that may be sung. In *Misa en Do and Re*, Hilarión Eslava has composed choral versions of five such elements, and of course *Misa Breve* follows suit in this regard. In his typical style, which based on musical theme and tempo might have been considered a bit ‘revolutionary’ by the religious authorities of his day, we hear dance-like rhythms, lilting melodies, and dramatic flourishes that probably drew the attention of the congregants experiencing the music. These five pieces 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 I 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

2. **Gloria:** *This is a song expressing adoration of God, followed by a prayer to the Holy Trinity. It begins with the Latin phrase “Gloria in excelsis deo”, sometimes sung by the officiant. The choir then starts at the second line (“Et in terra pax hominibus”). The complete traditional Latin lyrics follow, as written and translated below:*

*Gloria in excelsis Deo (here presumably sung by the officiant)
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,

qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis;

qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.

Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimus,

Iesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu: in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest,
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,
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.
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.

3. **Credo:** Following the homily or sermon, the Mass requires a Profession of Faith, or Creed, which summarizes the basic teachings of the Church. The traditional Nicene Creed is the text utilized by Eslava in his *Credo* here.

CREDO in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem, factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in unum Dominum Iesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, Lumen de Lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero, genitum non factum, consubstantialem Patri; per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis. Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est, et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas, et ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria, iudicare vivos et mortuos, cuius regni non erit finis. Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit. Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per prophetas. Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

I BELIEVE in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, He suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the Prophets. And I believe in one holy, catholic and

apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen

4. **Sanctus:** The *Sanctus* (“Holy”) is typically sung prior to the priest consecrating the Communion elements. The lyrics and translation are:

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt cæli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest

5. **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:

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

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.