

## Editor's Notes for *Letrillas a los Dolores de la Virgen Santísima*

*Letrillas* are a short poetic form in Spanish which, when used in a religious context, become short canticles sung for a particular religious event or devotion. In this case, the lyrics refer to the first of the Virgin Mary's Seven Sorrows (The Prophecy of Simeon, as found in Chapter 2 of the Gospel of Luke). These *Letrillas* may have been sung just before, or around the festivities of Lent and perhaps specifically during the Septenary of Our Lady of Sorrows, the seven days preceding Holy Week.

The manuscript source score, from Eresbil (the Basque music archive), appears to be a late copy not in the composer's handwriting consisting of *particellas* for organ and for a single (soprano) voice. The cover bears the inscription "Letrillas a los Dolores de la Virgen Santísima a solo y coro por D. Hilarión Eslava." Indications are that this short composition was at the time likely intended for a boy choir or perhaps women's voices, with some of the parts sung as solos.

Halfway through the piece, at Measure 26, the organ *particella* contains the indication "Tiple 1º, Tiple 2º, si lo hay, para reforzar hasta el fin" ("1<sup>st</sup> Soprano and 2<sup>nd</sup> Soprano, if available, to reinforce to the end"). And at Measure 38, the voice *particella* notes "Contralto" and "todos". As the voice part at that point is too high for a Contralto, I have assumed that perhaps a Contralto part was missing in this copy, and optionally added harmonies based on the accompaniment, for performance purposes. The addition is clearly marked on the transcription. Obviously, it can be ignored if only soprano voices are used.

### Spanish Lyrics and Translation

Oh, qué pena Señora que sentiste cuando a cumplir la ley al templo fuiste y os dijo Simeón en profecía que tu alma un cuchillo pasaría. Por esta pena os pido, Madre mía me asistáis en la última agonía. Por esta pena os pido, Madre mía me asistáis en la última agonía.	Oh, what sorrow you felt when to obey the law you went to the temple and Simeon in prophecy told you that a knife your heart would pierce. For that sorrow I beg you, my Mother that you be with me in the last agony. For that sorrow I beg you, my Mother that you be with me in the last agony.
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